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THESIS

CHANGES IN GUERRILLA CONFLICTS IN LATIN AMERICA AFTER THE COLD WAR

by

Francisco J. Martinez

December 2000

Thesis Advisor: Jeanne K. Giraldo
Co-Advisor: Harold A. Trinkunas

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CHANGES IN GUERRILLA CONFLICTS IN LATIN AMERICA AFTER THE COLD WAR

Francisco J. Martinez
Lieutenant, United States Navy
B.A., San Diego State University, 1996

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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December 2000

Author: [redacted]
Francisco J. Martinez

Approved by: [redacted]
Jeanne K. Giraldo, Thesis Advisor

[redacted]
Harold A. Trinkunas, Co-Advisor

[redacted]
Frederick Rocker, Acting Chairman
Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the impact of the end of the Cold War and acceleration of the communications revolution on international support for guerrilla movements in Latin America. As a consequence of the world's transformation from a bipolar to a multipolar system, non-governmental agencies, international organizations, and the United Nations have more influence in insurgent conflicts than ever before. At the same time, the acceleration of the communications revolution has increased the power of non-state international actors, and has played a key role in helping guerrilla movements disseminate their ideas and goals. These changes are demonstrated in this thesis by two case studies. The Salvadoran case illustrates how a guerrilla conflict that existed during the Cold War was transformed into a peace-making process at the end of it. The Mexican case illustrates how a guerrilla movement that began after the Cold War ended behaving differently from the guerrilla conflicts of the Cold War, and how it has used the acceleration of the communications revolution to its advantage.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 1
- A. IMPORTANCE OF THE THESIS 4
- B. METHODOLOGY 5
- C. THESIS ORGANIZATION 6

II. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR INSURGENT CONFLICTS IN LATIN AMERICA: THE IMPACT OF THE COLD WAR AND THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION 9
- A. INTRODUCTION 9
- B. COLD WAR PERIOD 11
  - 1. The United States 12
  - 2. The Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua 14
  - 3. The United Nations 18
  - 4. Latin American Countries 20
  - 5. Non-Governmental Organizations 22
  - 6. Communications Revolution 23
- C. POST-COLD WAR PERIOD 25
  - 1. The United States 26
  - 2. The Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua 29
  - 3. The United Nations 30
  - 4. Latin American Countries 32
  - 5. Non-Governmental Organizations 33
  - 6. Communications Revolution 37
- D. CONCLUSION 40

III. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR INSURGENTS AND COUNTERINSURGENTS DURING THE COLD WAR AND POST-COLD WAR: THE CASE OF EL SALVADOR 43
- A. INTRODUCTION 43
- B. COLD WAR PERIOD 44
  - 1. Domestic Factors Affecting the Insurgency 45
  - 2. International Factors Affecting the Insurgency 49
- C. POST-COLD WAR PERIOD 64
  - 1. Domestic Factors Affecting the Insurgency 64
  - 2. International Factors Affecting the Insurgency 66
- D. CONCLUSION 76

IV. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR INSURGENTS AND COUNTERINSURGENTS DURING THE COLD WAR AND POST-COLD WAR: THE CASE STUDY OF MEXICO 79
- A. INTRODUCTION 79
- B. COLD WAR PERIOD 81
  - 1. Domestic Factors Affecting the Insurgency 83

2. International Factors Affecting the Insurgency 87
C. POST-COLD WAR 89
1. Domestic Factors and the Course of Insurgent Conflict (1987-94) ... 90
2. Domestic Factors and the Course of Insurgent Conflict (1994-Present) 93
3. International Factors Affecting the Insurgency 99
4. Other Guerrilla Groups 107
D. CONCLUSION 108

V. CONCLUSION 111
A. COLD WAR 111
B. POST COLD-WAR 113
C. FUTURE 115

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This thesis examines the impact of the end of the Cold War and the current acceleration of the communications revolution on guerrilla movements in Latin America. It demonstrates that domestic guerrrilla movements have adapted to these changes. Since the end of the Cold War, the security environment of the world has been transformed and with it the behaviors of guerrilla organizations.

The United States and the Soviet Union no longer are the main supporters of counterinsurgents and insurgents, whose support has become diversified. Now international actors such the United Nations and non-governamental organizations play an important part in supporting these insurgents and counterinsurgents.

The guerrilla movements also have adapted to the acceleration of the communications revolution to the degree that their international support is dependent on having a good public image. Their survival depends on having a myriad of international and private supporters.

In El Salvador, a guerrilla group that was engaged in a bloody struggle as a consequence of the Cold War had to transform itself once the Cold War ended in order to adapt to the demands of new national and international supporters. The Salvadoran government also had to abandon its tactics of terror and indescriminate attacks due to pressure from non-governmental organizationons and the United Nations.

The Mexican case study illustrates how the Zapatista guerrilla group, though present during the Cold War, could not achieve prominence until after the Cold War ended. The Zapatistas also took advantage of the new world environment and

globalization. They successfully exploited the availability of new forms of communication and obtained international supporters virtually overnight. The Mexican government could not supress the Zapatistas as vigorously as it had other groups in the past, due to unprecedented international visibility.

The new post-Cold War era and the acceleration of the communications revolution has changed the way guerrilla movements operate in Latin America. They have joined the 21st century and are ready to continue fighting in new ways that the United States must understand and to which it must adapt.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since the late 1980s, the people of the United States have been living in a changed international environment, brought about by the end of the Cold War and the communications revolution. As the Cold War came to an end, many scholars believed that the chief problems of the Cold War also would disappear.[1] Students of U.S.-Latin American relations, in particular, have stressed the importance of new issues, such as environment, trade, democracy, and human rights.[2] Few people, however, have been concerned with the impact of the new security environment on the "old issues" of the Cold War, such as guerrilla conflicts. The end of the Cold War has not signified the end of insurgencies, as can be seen in Mexico, El Salvador, Colombia, and elsewhere.

Although the end of the Cold War has not eliminated insurgencies, it has changed the rules of the game, particularly in terms of international support and involvement. The importance of international support to insurgents varies from case to case: there are insurgents such as Shining Path in Peru that survived with minimal international support; but others, such as the Zapatista uprising, would not have survived without international visibility and help. Insurgents do receive economic aid and political support from sources in their own countries, but in this thesis I will concentrate on the international dimension. I argue that the international actors who are involved in insurgent conflicts today differ from those of the Cold War, and they provide aid in different ways and on

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[1] Robert Lieber, "Existential Realism After the Cold War." "Strategy and Force Planning." (New Port: Naval War College, 1997), 70.

different terms from in the past. The United States should be ready to understand the new players' rules and act accordingly.

This thesis seeks to give some understanding of the new dimensions of international involvement in insurgency conflicts. Specifically, it asks how the nature and impact of international involvement and support for insurgency conflicts have changed at the end of the millennium. In order to address my research question, I will examine the following four questions:

1. What impact has the end of the Cold War had on the nature of international involvement in insurgencies?

2. What impact has the acceleration of the communications revolution had on international involvement in insurgencies?

3. How have changes in the nature of international support affected the behavior of insurgents and counterinsurgents?

4. What new opportunities and new challenges do these changes pose for U.S. policy towards insurgents?

During the Cold War, guerrilla movements in many Latin American countries received support from major Cold War actors or their surrogates (e.g., the United States, the Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua). These international actors influenced conflicts to achieve their desired goals. Since 1991, however, new actors have found increasing opportunities to have some influence on these conflicts. These new actors have included non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the United Nations, and individual citizens.

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[2] Jonathan Hartlyn, Lars Schoultz, and Augusto Varas, "The United States and Latin America in the 1990s: Beyond the Cold War." (University of North Carolina Press, 1994).

Each has different goals from those the United States or the Soviet Union once held. The new players seek peaceful solutions to the ongoing insurgent conflicts. Since the United States and the Soviet Union withdrew their support from Latin American guerrilla movements, the international actors that have become involved in insurgent conflicts also are more diverse. International actors such as non-governmental organizations and the United Nations now have more influence than some state actors. Guerrilla groups still are dependent on international aid, but now they are appealing to different supporters with different objectives. These actors are more diverse, more numerous and also more decentralized than previous supporters of guerrilla organizations.

The end of the Cold War coincided with an increase in the ease of global communications. This change allowed the international community to start playing a more decisive part in the peace process to end insurgent conflicts. The increased flow of information led people to put more pressure on politicians to end the conflicts or help people caught up in the fighting. The acceleration of the communications revolution also has created different ways to support the insurgents. People are now able to send money via the Internet using credit cards, or other means of electronic money transfer. Money can reach the insurgents in seconds, securely, and anonymously if desired.

The acceleration of the communications revolution also has changed the way support is being provided to the insurgents. John Arquilla, in his book *The Zapatista Social Netwar in Mexico*, says: "The information revolution is leading to the rise of network forms of organization, whereby small, previously isolated groups can

communicate, link up, and conduct coordinated joint actions as never before."[3] Non-governmental organizations can link together to share ideas and support networks, which in turn can have an impact on insurgent's conflicts. Their impact is the result of the direct pressure that NGOs and civilian organizations are able to put on governments on behalf of specific players in a conflict. Through a rapid initial response to the conflict, NGOs can provide fast economic and political support to insurgents, which can guarantee their initial survival. Individual citizens also can provide financial aid, propaganda dissemination, and political support to guerrilla movements.

This thesis differs from Arquilla's in that I will argue that the Internet is just part of the communications revolution and not the revolution itself. Television, radio, newspaper, and telephones remain important means to communicate ideas, goals, and obtain international support. Furthermore, the decline in superpower interest that resulted from the end of the Cold Was has permitted the influence of support groups empowered by the communications revolution to flourish.

A. IMPORTANCE OF THE THESIS

As a result of the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the communications revolution, the United States must be ready to deal with new actors. The United States has to consider new ways to influence the outcome of guerrilla conflicts. This is necessary in order to successfully implement new policies and programs in countries in which guerrilla conflicts are present. It is important to understand the nature of

[3] David Ronfeldt, John Arquilla, Graham E. Fuller, and Melisa Fuller, "The Zapatistas Social Netwar in Mexico." (Santa Monica: RAND, 1998), xi.

international support for insurgents in order to understand how the United States might want to deal with these new circumstances.

B. METHODOLOGY

I have selected two case studies, the insurgent conflicts in El Salvador and Mexico from the early 1970s to the present, to examine the changes that have come about due to the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the communications revolution. Guerrilla groups that existed in both countries during the Cold War and before the rise of high-speed global communications will provide a baseline for comparison. The Salvadoran civil war is a useful case study because the conflict bridged the Cold War and the post-Cold War period. The collapse of the Soviet Union directly influenced the outcome of the Salvadoran peace process.[4] Furthermore, the organizations involved in the peace process were in place in El Salvador before 1989. In this section I will examine whether those peace organizations were better able to influence the conflict due to the end of the Cold War. The acceleration of the communications revolution also was getting underway during this conflict. I will examine whether increased access to global communications, along with the collapse of the Soviet Union, allowed many of the NGOs in the conflict to come together and share resources to further the peace process.

I will then examine the Mexican Zapatista insurgency to determine whether the acceleration of the communications revolution, the end of the Cold War, or both, influenced the movement's current success. The Zapatista guerrilla group in Mexico already existed during the Cold War, but did not have influence until after the Cold War

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[4] Cynthia A. Arnson, eds. "Comparative Peace Process in Latin America." (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999), 258.

ended. I will examine how international supporters influence about the behavior of both the guerrillas and the government. Before 1991, guerrillas were not able to come out in the open because a strong Mexican government had the ability to crush them. NGOs did not have major influence on Mexican leaders until the end of the Cold War, when internal actions became more liable to international scrutiny. During the Zapatistas' initial revolt, however, the Mexican government was prevented from crushing the rebels due to the involvement of NGOs.[5] With the help of the international community, the Zapatistas forced the Mexican government to respond to some of their demands in peaceful ways.[6] I will examine the impact of the communications revolution on the response of the Mexican government to the Zapatista rebellion. I also will look at other Mexican guerrilla groups, such as the Ejército Popular Revolucionario (EPR) and Frente de Liberación Nacional (FLN) that have tried the Internet strategies used by the Zapatistas but have failed to win support. Comparing these groups will suggest under what conditions, if any, insurgents can take advantage of the communications revolution.

C. THESIS ORGANIZATION

Chapter II examines the Cold War and the impact its end had on the world's security environment. It also discusses the impact of the acceleration of the communications revolution on potential international involvement in insurgent conflicts. Chapter III is the case study of El Salvador. It illustrates the changes that occurred in the conflict as a direct result of the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the communications revolution. Chapter IV is the case study of the Zapatista uprising in

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[5] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, and Fuller, 63.

[6] Ibid.

Mexico. It demonstrates why the Zapatistas were able to generate international support for their movement only after the end of the Cold War, due in part to their use of some of the tools brought about by the acceleration of the communications revolution.

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II. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR INSURGENT CONFLICTS IN LATIN AMERICA: THE IMPACT OF THE COLD WAR AND THE COMMUNICATIONS REVOLUTION

A. INTRODUCTION

Insurgent conflicts are a reflection of internal problems that are brought to light by people who can no longer tolerate their current governmental systems. In order to survive and have an impact, these insurgents often depend on support from outside their own country. International actors who have an interest in the final outcome of the conflict provide this external support. In Latin America during the Cold War the major international actors of guerrilla conflicts were the United States and the Soviet Union. In many instances, the United States provided economic support and military training to Latin American governments while the Soviet Union and its allies in Latin America, Cuba and Nicaragua lent support to insurgencies. A communications revolution started simultaneously with the Cold War in the late 1940s. Technological advances in communications formed part of the arsenal used in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union and, as might be expected, they were used as tools in guerrilla conflicts.[7]

In 1989, two factors changed the relationship between insurgents, counterinsurgents and their supporters around the world: the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the communications revolution.

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[7] Ibid., 421.

The end of the Cold War shifted sources of support for the various sides in civil conflicts from state actors, such as the United States and Soviet Union, to international (non-state) actors. These non-state actors include non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the United Nations, and individual citizens. International organizations were present during the Cold War, but at that time they could not have a major impact on the outcome of guerrilla conflicts due to the overwhelming power and influence of the two superpowers. These new groups have different goals and objectives from those of the former Soviet Union, Cuba, Nicaragua, and the United States during the Cold War. The major objective of NGOs, the United Nations, and most others, is termination of the conflict and the achievement of a successful peace settlement.

The acceleration of the communications revolution increased after the end of the Cold War with improvements in information dissemination, due in part to changes in television news networks, the widespread use of personal computers, and the development of the Internet. This helped international organization such as NGOs to disseminate their messages and obtain support.

The chapter will describe the changes in the international political environment brought by the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the communications revolution. It will advance hypotheses about the impact of these changes on international support for insurgents and counterinsurgents and how this has affected the course of guerrilla conflicts.

The chapter is divided in two main sections, the Cold War and post-Cold War periods. Each section describes the impact of the communications revolution, the interest

of international actors in insurgent conflicts, their means of supporting insurgents and counterinsurgents, and the impact of their support on the course of guerrilla conflicts.

B. COLD WAR PERIOD

The guerrilla movements that originated in Latin America from the late 1940s to the middle 1980s developed within the bipolar nature of the Cold War conflict. The national security strategies of the United States and Soviet Union considered guerrilla conflicts to be another aspect of their own Cold War standoff.[8] Each of the two superpowers believed its duty was to protect and support the countries under its umbrella from the influences of its opponent.[9]

The communications revolution that began during the Cold War had a greater effect on governments than on the public because up to that point governments controlled the communications networks in their countries to a great extent. Even when national leaders were not actually controlling or manipulating the media in democratic countries, they had the advantage of possessing the expensive equipment necessary to store, analyze, and disseminate vast amounts of information. But guerrillas during this period also started to learn the benefits of the communications revolution, which helped level the playing field in a few special cases. It would not be until the end of the Cold War, however, when the acceleration of the communications revolution made access to the media and world opinion much easier, allowing guerrilla groups to take advantage of these resources.

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[8] Abraham F. Lowenthal, "Partners in Conflict: The United States and Latin America in the 1990's." (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), x.

[9] George L. Sherry, "The United Nations Reborn." *Critical Issues*. 1990-2: 8.

In the following sections I will demonstrate in general terms how the United States, the Soviet Union, and their allies intervened in guerrilla conflicts during the Cold War. In contrast, I will show why other international actors--i.e., the United Nations, NGOs, and Latin American countries-- were not able to influence guerrilla conflicts.

1. The United States

The United States was the major supporter and advisor for most of the counterinsurgent governments in Latin America. The main interest of the United States in the guerrilla conflicts of Latin America was to contain the Soviet Union.[10] This containment policy was formulated in 1947 in a famous article by George F. Kennan, written under the pseudonym "X."[11] In terms of the evolution of American policy towards Latin American insurgencies, the most important aspect of Kennan's theory was the assumption of the "domino effect."[12] U. S. senior leaders came to believe that if one country fell to communist rule, many more would fall in that country's region as well, like a row of dominoes.[13] U. S. policymakers began to plan how to prevent communism in Latin America. One example of this phenomenon is the "Caracas Declaration of Solidarity," which in 1954 was imposed on the majority of the Organization of American States (OAS) members by the United States.[14] The declaration stated that the intervention of any communist influence or powers into the Western Hemisphere was a

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[10] Ibid., 9.

[11] Robert D. Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy." In "Strategy and Force Planning." (Newport: Naval War College, 1997), 375.

[12] Lowenthal, 30.

[13] Robert S. Chase, Emily B. Hill, and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy." In "Strategy and Force Planning." (Newport: Naval War College, 1997), 329.

threat to all of the Americas. The United States was determined that the domino effect would not be allowed to happen, especially in its "own backyard," Latin America. Once Cuba fell to communist rule under Fidel Castro in 1959, the United States saw this policy failing in Latin America.

President John F. Kennedy, in response to the Cuban revolution, launched the multi-billion-dollar program "Alliance for Progress" in 1961, the main goal of which was to help develop Latin American nations at risk of falling under communist control.[15] The subsequent U.S. administrations of Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon continued supporting efforts to prevent guerrilla victories in Latin America. During the administration of President James Carter, in 1979, the problem became more acute when Nicaragua witnessed the victory of the Sandinistas over dictator Anastosio Somosa. The credibility of the United States as a defender of Latin America from communist influence came into question, and the domino effect was becoming a reality in the eyes of many senior American leaders. They decided that, regardless of the cost, no more Latin American countries would be allowed to fall to communist rule. It was the duty of U.S. politicians, social institutions, and military personnel to make sure this did not happen again.

When President Ronald Reagan took office in 1981, U.S. concern over communist influence in the region grew, and support to many of the governments of Latin America, particularly neighbors of Nicaragua, increased dramatically. For example, between 1982 and 1986, 58 percent of all foreign assistance to Costa Rica came

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[14] Brian Loveman, and Thomas M. Davies, "Che Guevara: Guerrilla Warfare." (Wilmington: A Scholarly Resources Inc. Imprint, 1997), 185.

from the United States.[16] U.S. economic aid and support to Honduras was increased from $55 million between 1971 to 1980, to $187 million from 1981 to 1990.

2. The Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua

The Soviet Union had little influence in Latin America before the Cold War, but once the Cold War began Soviet leaders sought to increase their influence in "America's backyard." Soviet interests in Latin America during this period essentially were "to strengthen Soviet influence wherever possible, to defend Socialist Cuba and to weaken the still predominant position of the United States."[17] Soviet influence in Latin America was increased using three different methods. The first was through state-to-state relations using diplomatic venues such as embassies and treaties; the second was by supporting the local communist parties; and the third was through supporting guerrilla movements. These same methods were used by the Soviet Union's allies in Latin America, especially Cuba in the 1970s and 1980s.[18] State-to-state relations and support to communist parties were the preferred ways for the Soviet Union to influence Latin American nations, while direct involvement in guerrilla activities was more controversial. Eighty Soviet diplomats were expelled by nine Latin American nations between 1945 and 1973.[19] The

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[15] Lowenthal, 1.

[16] "The Role of Economic Aid in Development." The Congress of the United States, (Congressional Budget Office. 1997), 54.

[17] James D. Theberge, "The Soviet Presence in Latin America." (New York: Crane, Russak & Company, Inc, 1974), 5.

[18] Jorge I. Domínguez, "To Make a World Safe for Revolution: Cuba's Foreign Policy. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 113-115.

[19] Theberge, 26.

majority of them were expelled because of alleged ties with guerrilla leaders and their involvement in the training of insurgents.[20]

After 1959, the Soviet Union protected Cuba from the United States by supporting it economically and militarily. This aid to Cuba came not only in the form of hard currency, but also in food, supplies, trade, loans, and technology, given in five-year increments. Table 1 below shows the amount of Soviet aid to Cuba from 1971 to 1990, illustrating the level of commitment the Soviet Union had to Cuba and Castro.

Table 1. Total Aid to Cuba from the Soviet Union

5 year periods	Amount in millions of U.S. dollars
1971-75	3,541
1976-80	14,215
1981-85	22,072
1986-90	21,733
All aid to Cuba stopped in 1992.	

Source: Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "The Economic Effects on Cuba of the Downfall of Socialism in the USSR and Eastern Europe." in *Cuba After the Cold War*, Mesa-Lago, editor, (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 148.

The United Revolutionary Directorate (DRU) was formed by Cuba to distribute some of these funds to guerrilla movements in Latin America.[21] Cuban leader Fidel Castro frequently invited other guerrilla leaders to Cuba for training and leadership courses.[22]

During the 1960s, Cuba was extremely active in supporting Latin American guerrilla movements, often against the wishes of Moscow, which favored state-to-state

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[20] Ibid., 26-27.

[21] Loveman and Davies, 403.

relations with Latin American countries to support communist's parties that participated in electoral politics.[23] The majority of the movements in which Cuba was involved during that time were led by former student activists who had defected from the local communist parties.[24] In Guatemala during the early 1960s, Cuban support was essential to both the economic and moral survival of the anti-government guerrilla movement. Cuban revolutionary hero Ernesto "Che" Guevara provided training and arms to the Guatemalan revolutionary movement "Movimiento 21 de Septiembre."[25]

In the Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Bolivia during the same decade, Cuba sponsored guerrilla expeditions and provided arms, ammunitions, supplies, and leadership.[26] Che Guevara and several members of the Bolivian Communist Central Committee were killed trying to organize an insurrection in the country.[27] During the late 1960s, Cuba provided weapons to Puerto Rican rebels who wanted independence from the United States.[28]

In the 1970s, Cuba reduced its support for guerrilla movements in response to pressure from the Soviet Union.[29] As a consequence of this realignment, Soviet support to Cuba increased during this period.[30]

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[22] Cynthia McClintock, "Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN & Peru's Shinning Path." (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 60.

[23] Domínguez, 145.

[24] Loveman and Davies, 347.

[25] Ibid., 348.

[26] Domínguez, 118-123.

[27] Ibid., 118-136.

[28] Ibid., 118-134.

[29] Ibid., 144.

The Cuban and Soviet positions toward support for guerrilla organizations changed with the victory of the revolutionaries in Nicaragua in 1979. The Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN, or "Sandinistas") received a significant amount of Soviet and Cuban support. By 1981, Sandinista guerrillas had received $100 million in aid from the Soviet Union and $500 million by 1985.[31] Nicaragua also was used as a training ground for many Latin American guerrilla forces, especially after FSLN leader Daniel Ortega won the 1984 elections. Military advisors from Cuba, under the leadership of Cuban General Arnaldo Ochoa, traveled to Nicaragua to organize and train Nicaraguan soldiers. The training focused on tactics designed to win battles against the U.S. funded and trained Contra insurgents. Arms and ammunitions from Cuba and the Soviet Union were transferred through Nicaragua to other Central American nations as well. During the guerrilla conflict in El Salvador, for example, an estimated 70 percent of all arms, ammunitions, and supplies to rebels arrived via Nicaragua.[32]

The influence and support of Cuba and the Soviet Union in guerrilla movements was so overwhelming during this period that guerrilla organizations could not hide their connections with them.[33] The Soviet Union provided everything from advisors and arms in El Salvador to helicopter gunships in Nicaragua.[34]

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Daniel Papp, "Soviet Policies Toward the Developing World During the 1980's: The Dilemmas of Power and Presence." (Alabama: Air University Press, 1986), 133.

[32] Caesar D. Sereseres, "The Lessons of Recent Wars in the Third World, Volume 1." "Lessons from Central America's Revolutionary Wars: 1972-1984." (Lexington: Heartland and Company, 1985), 176.

[33] Castañeda, 137.

[34] Loveman and Davies, 369.

3. The United Nations

The United Nations was present in Latin America during the Cold War, but it kept a low profile and played a minimal role in resolving insurgent conflicts.[35] When the United Nations did become involved, its resolutions had little effect due to its limited influence. One of the main reasons for this inability to influence conflict around the world was that during the entire Cold War era, UN members were divided between the United States and its allies on one side, and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other side.[36] This division between the key members of the Security Council paralyzed the ability of the United Nations to act effectively.[37] As a result, the United Nations was unable to carry out development programs in the region, field observers and monitors during Latin American elections, or participate in direct talks with insurgents and counterinsurgents to pursue peace.

The United States used its power to prevent policies drafted by UN organizations not favorable to U.S. interests from being enacted. In 1954, Raúl Prebisch, director of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, presented a plan for economic development in Latin America. The United States saw the plan as an obstacle to the achievement of its own goals and therefore did not look at it seriously.[38] Several times, U.S. diplomats left UN projects unattended, so that they ultimately faded away. The United States sent a clear message to the United Nations during this period, to let it know

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[35] Sherry, 10.

[36] Steven Metz, "The Future of the United Nations: Implications for Peace Operations." (Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 1993), .3.

[37] Lieber, 74.

[38] Lowenthal, 30.

that it had no business in Latin America.[39] Bribes to small countries were another tool the United States used to control the United Nations. Until 1971, for example, the United States could always count on Haiti's vote, in return for which Haiti would receive grants and other aid right after the votes were taken.[40]

During the Cold War, the United Nations did not oversee electoral processes in contrast to its post-Cold War activism in this area. Even when it was well known that some elections were fraudulent, the legitimacy of the process could not be successfully contested by the international community because there were no credible observers. For the Americans and Soviets, elections were one more weapon to use in their fight for supremacy. The United States could not let socialist parties win an election, so it did not have any intention of letting the United Nations monitor the elections. The 1958 Cuban elections, for example, were supposed to have UN observers on hand, but under the influence of the U.S. ambassador voting was postponed several months to prevent observers from being in place. The voting was rigged and Fulgencio Bautista won.[41]

During this period, the United Nations did not participate in any peace process in the world. The bipolar standoff in the Security Council and the United Nations in general did not allow multilateral participation in peace processes.

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[39] Teresa Whitfield, "The Role of the United Nations in El Salvador and Guatemala: A preliminary Comparison." In "Comparative Peace Process in Latin America." Arnson, Cynthia A., eds. (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999), 260.

[40] Thomas E. Skidmore and Peter Smith, "Modern Latin America." (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 304.

[41] McClintock, 215.

4. Latin American Countries

Although Latin American countries themselves initiated peace processes to end the guerrilla conflicts in their region, positive results were not obtained during the Cold War because of the influence the two superpowers had on the region. In light of the support the United States gave to friendly governments involved in guerrilla conflicts, and Soviet backing of loyal guerrilla organizations, a peaceful solution was not feasible. Neither side had incentives to compromise, therefore, the fighting continued.

Latin American countries formed working groups whose interest was resolution of the guerrilla conflicts. The "Contadora Group," formed in 1983 by Colombia, Panama, Mexico, and Venezuela, worked to prevent domestic conflicts (especially in Nicaragua) from becoming regional wars. The second group, composed of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras, and El Salvador, drafted the Esquipulas plan in 1987. These efforts did not obtain the desired results due to the continual interference of the two superpowers, especially the United States.[42] The United States did not want to give power or concessions to the guerrilla movements in Central America.

Latin American leaders realized that the United States was not seeking a peaceful solution to the guerrilla insurgencies.[43] Peace was essential for Latin America's leaders because they did not want the conflicts to spread to their own countries. As a consequence, some Latin American governments began to deviate from U.S. policy,

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[42] Rose J. Spalding, "From Low-Intensity War to Low-Intensity Peace: The Nicaraguan Peace Process." In "Comparative Peace Process in Latin America." Arnson, Cynthia A., eds. (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999), 33.

[43] Lowenthal, 30.

including voting against the United States in the UN assembly.[44] In particular, the larger countries in Latin America, such as Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina, did not consider their interests to be aligned with those of the United States. Many Latin American countries started to form alliances during this time and also started to seek peace settlements in regional guerrilla conflicts.[45]

Although Latin American leaders were aware of their limitations, they acted on their own, providing venues for negotiations to take place and the staff to draw up the initial peace treaties. Later on in the post-Cold War period, these treaties would provide the bases of the peace processes. The OAS was not independent enough of the United States to provide a forum for peace talks. U.S. officials insisted that OAS headquarters be located in Washington in order to have physical control over it and to have political influence over its policies.[46] Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, and Uruguay offered a political-diplomatic base for negotiations to end the conflicts in El Salvador and Guatemala.[47] This was very important, because by providing a base for negotiations outside the OAS headquarters in Washington, Latin American countries could control the peace talks without U.S. interference.

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[44] Javier Corrales, and Richard E. Feinberg, "Regimes of Cooperation in the Western Hemisphere: Power, Interests, and Intellectual Traditions." *International Studies Quarterly*, 1999, 7.

[45] Loveman and Davies, 371.

[46] Lowenthal, 29.

[47] Patrice J. McSherry, "Civil Conflicts And The Role Of The International Community: The Case Of Guatemala and El Salvador." Columbia International Affairs Online. Available [Online]:<https://wwwc.cc.columbia.edu/sec/dlc/ciao/wps/mcp01/mcp01.html. [29 February 2000].

5. Non-Governmental Organizations

Although non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were present in Latin America during the Cold War and especially active in human rights endeavors, they had little influence in promoting peace settlements because of superpower involvement. NGOs also were fewer in number and far less well funded than they generally are today.

The budgets of most NGOs during the Cold War were not sufficient to maintain a presence in many areas, which further limited their ability to intervene in conflicts. For example, the total aid to NGOs from governments that belonged to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) was only $462 million in 1975, compared to $2.3 billion in 1985.[48] As a consequence of these economic restrictions, on the few occasions during the Cold War in which NGOs became involved in Latin America, they provided humanitarian relief to zones of natural disasters and local famine, such as to the regions of Nicaragua that were devastated by the earthquake of 1972.[49] This aid was made possible by the influx of money NGOs received specifically for earthquake relief from both governments and private citizens around the world.

Although NGOs did try to obtain new supporters by using the existing media, they were not successful enough to make major changes in government policies. For the majority of this period, private organizations were not able to obtain all the tools they needed in order to have media coverage in their favor.

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[48] Michael Edwards and David Hulme, "From Accountability to Shared Responsibility: NGO Evaluation in Latin America." In "Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World." Michael Edwards, and David Hulme, ed. (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1996), 3.

[49] Kees Biekart, "From Accountability to Shared Responsibility: NGO Evaluation in Latin America." In "Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World." Michael Edwards, and David Hulme, ed. (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1996), 81.

The involvement of non-governmental organizations in Latin American conflicts began to change in the late 1980s. As the bipolar international system started to dissolve and the influence of the accelerated communications revolution began to be felt, NGOs started to participate directly and influence guerrilla conflicts in areas beyond the monitoring of human rights violations.

6. Communications Revolution

The beginnings of the communications revolution coincided with the start of the Cold War in the late 1940s. This revolution in communications technology includes the introduction of computerized dissemination of information and related innovations in communications.[50]

During this time, the two superpowers maintained supremacy in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of communications. Both governments owned a large portion of the new technologies and distributed them to friendly governments in order to manipulate and impact conflicts in their regions of interest, i.e., the guerilla wars in Latin America. Non-state actors had less access to these new technologies, and when they did gain access, it often was manipulated by the granting government. A majority of citizens and organizations in Latin American countries depended on their governments for information, but anything that might be damaging to a government was safely guarded from public knowledge. Government control of information during this period was aided by the high cost of equipment, which meant only governments and big private businesses with political ties to government could afford it. Non-governmental organizations and

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[50] John Arquilla, and David Ronfeldt, "In Athena's Camp: Preparing for the Conflict in the Information Age." (Santa Monica: RAND, 1997), 25.

individual citizens rarely could afford to buy the necessary communications equipment or the time slots controlled by big media outlets. In 1970, for example, an IBM mainframe computer (10 times slower than a current laptop) sold for $five million, a price that even today few companies can afford.[51] Motorola started selling cellular telephones in 1984 for a price of $four thousand each.[52] The first Internet, called the ARPnet was created in 1975, and it was used only by the military and civilian universities to do research.[53] Television stations were few, especially in Latin America, and few people had access to them, but, most importantly, the government controlled the information. Around the clock news coverage was not available as it is now, and computers were rare.

Although guerrillas were not able to take full advantage of the communications revolution, they did use it when circumstances permitted. Cuban leader Fidel Castro gained a great deal of support from the United States after New York Times reporter Herbert Matthews interviewed him while he was encamped in the Sierra Madre Mountains. The American television network CBS ran a newsreel on Castro by reporter Robert Taber, who also spoke positively about the guerrilla fighter.[54] Within Cuba, Fidel Castro was able to use the media to obtain domestic aid and supporters. He used rebel radio station "Radio Libertad" effectively to spread his doctrines to the masses in Cuba, while the local newspapers, besides adding to his national support, gave him recognition

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[51] Reinventing Diplomacy in the Information Age, 3.

[52] Ibid., 4.

[53] Bryan C. Gabbard, and George S. Park, "The information Revolution in the Arab World: Commercial, Cultural and Political Dimensions." (Santa Monica: RAND, 1996), 11.

[54] Ibid.

and put a face to his name. As one peasant would say, "You are Fidel Castro! I saw your photos in the papers."[55]

Nicaraguan guerrillas, with the support of the middle class, also used the newspaper "La Prensa," owned by Pedro Joaquín Chamorro, to rally against dictator Anastasio Somoza.[56] The Sandinista rebels created "Radio Sandino" to broadcast messages to the people and coded messages to the guerrillas in the field.[57]

Despite these instances, guerrilla conflicts were viewed as distant and isolated by the citizens of the United States and other countries, but they were considered to be important developments by the two superpowers. Live coverage of events was rare, and more importantly, the images of guerrilla conflicts were not shown as graphically as they are now. Access to news media by the guerrillas and their NGO supporters was rare, and when they did have access, it was due to luck and dependent on the reporters and media owners involved.

C. POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

The Cold War officially ended in 1989, but changes started as earlier as 1987, with the development of a new political and strategic relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. The new international political situation quickly transformed the world's security environment. Most significantly, the United States began to view guerrilla conflicts as internal problems of the affected states, rather than as part of the bipolar global standoff. The left in Latin America was shocked by the

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[55] Ibid, 175.

[56] Ibid, 274.

[57] Ibid, 275.

collapse of the Soviet Union and was not prepared for the change of posture from the United States.[58]

The end of the Cold War altered the relationship between the benefactors and the recipients of the guerrilla insurgencies. The United States and Soviet Union no longer were providing the necessary amounts of support for the insurgents and counterinsurgents to continue fighting. Instead, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens stepped forward and began to exert unprecedented influence in Latin America's guerrilla conflicts. Such influence had not been possible before due to the small percentage of overall support these organizations were providing. Unlike the United States and the Soviet Union, these non-governmental organizations were interested in peaceful solutions to the conflicts, and sought to achieve these ends by pushing both sides into giving concessions.

During this period the world also saw an acceleration in the communications revolution, which affected the ability of non-state actors such as NGOs and guerrillas to distribute their ideas and obtain supporters.

I argue in this section that the peace processes in the region succeeded as a direct result of the new international political and security environment brought about by the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the communications revolution.

1. The United States

By the end of the Cold War, the guerrilla conflicts in Latin America no longer were viewed as a menace to the national security of the United States. The Soviet influence and support to insurgents were gone, and Cuba had stopped training guerrillas.

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[58] Castañeda, 243.

The conflicts were now seen as an internal problem of the countries in which they were taking place. The Cold War was over and therefore the threat of the "domino effect" was gone.

As Soviet influence receded from the Western Hemisphere, so did U.S. aid to Latin America. As Table 2 shows, U.S. aid to Latin American countries has been going down since the end of the Cold War.

Table 2. United States Total Aid to Latin American Nations

Year	Amount in millions of U.S. dollars
1987	1,588.5
1988	1,218.6
1989	1,320.3
1990	1,794.9
1991	1,463.1
1992	1,185.5
1993	1,178.9
1994	824.2
1995	604.6
1996	575.0
1997	575.9

Source: "1998 Latin America and the Caribbean Selected Economic and Social Data," (Washington, D.C: United States Agency for International Development, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1998), 219.

When we subtract the aid to all the countries of South America and Mexico, we can see more clearly how U.S. economic aid was directed at the countries in Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama) where the guerrilla movements were centered. After the Cold War, U. S. aid to Central America dropped significantly, as show in Table 3.

Table 3. United States Total Aid to Central American Nations

Year	Amount in millions of U.S. dollars
1987	1,088.67
1988	768.64
1989	700.55
1990	1,288.77
1991	755.92
1992	538.97
1993	526.80
1994	272.99
1995	171.74
1996	175.05
1997	141.49

Source: "1998 Latin America and the Caribbean Selected Economic and Social Data," (Washington, D.C: United States Agency for International Development, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1998), 218.

In addition to reducing aid to counterinsurgents, U.S. politicians became engaged in more equal bilateral cooperation with Latin American politicians, based on increased mutual confidence that started to develop towards the end of the Cold War.[59] These changes permitted the birth of policies and strategies that led to peace processes for the guerrilla conflicts in Latin American nations. At the same time, the decline in U.S. aid and influence permitted the United Nations, non-governmental organizations and individual citizens to have more influence in insurgent conflicts. These entities were able to encourage the organization and planning of national elections in Latin America, as well as negotiated peace processes.

The United States, under various presidential administrations in the post-Cold War period, started to pay more attention to the media, which started to make an impact on its policies. During the last stage of the Nicaraguan conflict the United States government dedicated considerable time and money to getting positive exposure in the

[59] Lowenthal, x.

media. Relevant to the communications revolution, though outside Latin America, in 1992 U. S. armed forces became involved in Somalia's civil war due to the publicity given the famine in that country. American troops were pulled out once the television stations in the United States started to show bodies of American soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu. A Washington congressional inquiry into the conflict concluded, "Pictures of the starving children, not policy objectives, got us into Somalia in 1992. Pictures of U.S. casualties, not completion of our objectives, led us to exit."[60]

2. The Soviet Union, Cuba, and Nicaragua

After the Cold War, the former Soviet Union was no longer able to provide either economic or military assistance to Latin American insurgents, as it found itself involved in internal struggle and economic crisis. Its disappearance from Latin American affairs not only changed United States policy in Latin America, but affected the willingness of guerillas to negotiate for peace.[61]

On 12 September 1991, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev announced the withdrawal of all Soviet forces from Cuba.[62] In 1992, all Russian aid to Cuba ended.[63] Once the Soviet Union stopped supporting the Castro regime, Cuba could no longer assist any Latin American insurgencies either financially or militarily.[64] Supplies and arms already received were kept for the external defense of Cuba. The Cuban government is

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[60] Larry Minear, Colin Scott, and Thomas G. Weiss, "The News Media, Civil War, and Humanitarian Action." (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 53.

[61] Castañeda, 252.

[62] Cole Blassier, "The End of the Soviet-Cuban Partnership." "In Cuba: After the Cold War." Carmelo Mesa-Lago, ed. (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 89.

[63] Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "The End of the Soviet-Cuban Partnership." "In Cuba: After the Cold War." (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993), 147.

now defending its territory and ideology from the United States with no significant Russian support.

At the end of the Cold War, however, Cuba started to receive international aid from other Western countries. These democratic countries supported Cuba economically, but also put pressure on Cuba to stop providing guerrilla training to insurgents in other countries. In 1988, Cuba received only $3.3 million in bilateral aid, but in 1989 it started to receive larger amounts.

Politics in Nicaragua and Nicaraguan support for insurgents also were transformed after the Cold War. The Soviets cut off all support to Nicaragua in 1988.[65] The Sandinistas lost the 1990 elections and Violeta Barrios de Chamorro took office in April 1990.[66] The FSLN leaders had to retire from public office, but maintained a presence in the military.[67] The new center-right government turned its attention in rebuilding the country and did not provide further significant help or training to insurgents.

3. The United Nations

The end of the Cold War created opportunities for the United Nations to intervene and influence regional affairs in Latin America as a direct result of the void left by the United States and the Soviet Union. The new international environment permitted the

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[64] Castañeda, 252.

[65] McSherry, 10.

[66] Loveman and Davies, 377.

[67] Ibid.

Security Council members to agree on U.N resolutions.[68] United States leaders felt comfortable enough letting the United Nations get involved in world affairs for President Ronald Reagan to note in 1988: "Precisely because of these changes, today the United Nations has the opportunity to live and breathe and work as never before.... We are determined that the United Nations should succeed and serve the cause of peace for humankind."[69] One of the changes President Reagan was referring to was the warming of US-Soviet relations. The United Nations was finally doing what it had never been able to do during the Cold War, i.e., provide troops for the stabilization of the regions and to provide electoral support. .

Since the end of the Cold War, calls for the United Nations to intervene in international conflicts have multiplied.[70] Between its inception in 1945 and 1990, the Security Council had declared a formal threat to international peace and security only six times.[71] Since 1990, the Security Council has formally declared situations to be threats to international peace and security 61 times.[72] The United Nations has mounted 49 peacekeeping operations since 1948, of which 36 took place between 1988 and 1998.[73] As of 1 February 2000, the United Nations was actively involved in 17 peacekeeping

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[68] Hugh Byrne, "El Salvador's Civil War: A study of Revolution." (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996), 3.

[69] Indar Jit Rikhye, "The Future of Peacekeeping." (New York: International Peace Academy, 1989). 4.

[70] Lieber, 75.

[71] Jessica T. Mathews, "Power Shift." In "Strategy and Force Planning." (Newport: Naval War College, 1997), 86.

[72] Ibid.

[73] A few Facts. Available [Online]<http:www.un.org/Depts/DPKO/pk50_i.htm. [8 February 2000].

operations.[74] The first time that the United Nations became involved in a country's internal peace negotiations was in Latin America, when the United Nations took part in talks to resolve the Salvadoran conflict in 1991.[75] In Guatemala, the 36-year-old guerrilla war finally came to an end on 29 December 1996 with the help of the United Nations.[76]

In addition, the United Nations was involved in monitoring electoral processes, which is the organization's preferred method for creating peaceful solutions to domestic conflicts. Elections were especially important in the Latin American guerrilla conflicts, since this is how the United Nations wanted the insurgents to challenge the established governments. In Latin America, the United Nations participated in 11 national elections as monitors from 1990 to 1994 alone.[77]

4. Latin American Countries

Although Latin American countries were involved in guerrilla conflicts during the Cold War, no lasting or positive results were achieved until after the Cold War ended. Latin American governments at times supported insurgents and at other times the leaders being opposed, but in this section I concentrate on leaders' efforts to create peace processes to resolve guerrilla conflicts.

During this period such indigenous organizations as the Contadora Group, the Contadora Support Group, the Group of Friends, and the Central American nations, were essential in seeking peace in Central America. The hard work of the early 1980s started

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[74] United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Available [Online]<http:www.un.org. [8 February 2000].

[75] Arnson, 3.

[76] Ibid., 4.

to pay off, and even when the United Nations decided to get involved, it acknowledged the importance of Latin American leadership by mentioning that its involvement was in support of the peace process begun by Latin Americans themselves.[78]

In Guatemala, the Group of Friends was essential in bringing peace to the nation. They were the ones who initiated the peace process and brought the United Nations in to monitor the peace agreement. On this occasion, even the United States backed the decisions and tactics of this group.[79] In El Salvador, the Latin American countries played a key role on the peace negotiations. Their impact will be discussed in the chapter on El Salvador.

5. Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-governmental organizations have been crucial in protecting the human rights of insurgents, counterinsurgents, and citizens since the Cold War started, but their impact and importance in other areas have increased with the end of the Cold War. The number of non-governmental organizations has grown since 1989, and they have acquired a diverse pool of donors. As a result of these changes and the decline of superpower interest in most insurgent's conflicts, NGOs have had a stronger influence on government decision making and in the outcome of insurgent conflicts.[80]

The recent success of NGOs can be attributed to the hard work they have been doing since the early 1980s to coordinate efforts and share information among

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[77] Mathews, 87.

[78] Whitfield, 261-262.

[79] Ibid, 270-271.

[80] Mathews, 81

themselves.[81] For example, the number of NGOs registered with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) grew from 1,600 in 1980 to 2,970 in 1993.[82] In Bolivia, the number rose from 100 in 1980 to 530 in 1992.[83] In Peru there were 219 registered NGOs in 1980 and 897 in 1993.[84]

The amount of aid provided by NGOs to various countries also started to rise in the late 1980s. NGOs registered with the OECD spent $2.8 billion in 1980, $2.3 billion in 1985, and their spending more than doubled, to $5.7 billion, by 1993.[85] A small number of European countries provided some economic support to the NGOs operating in Latin America during the Cold War, but the amount of economic support from this source also increased significantly after the Cold War.[86] NGOs have provided more political assistance and development support (scientific, health, and technical analysis) than the United Nations.[87]

The pool of NGO donors has become more diverse. Once dependent on direct government support, NGOs now receive additional aid in the form of loans from other international organizations such as the World Bank, the Inter-American Foundation

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[81] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, and Fuller, 36.

[82] Michael Edwards, and David Hulme, "Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World." (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1996), 1.

[83] Edwards, and Hulme, 1.

[84] Héctor Béjar, and Peter Oakley, "From Accountability to Shared Responsibility: NGO Evaluation in Latin America." In "Beyond the Magic Bullet: NGO Performance and Accountability in the Post-Cold War World." Michael Edwards, and David Hulme, ed. (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1996), 91.

[85] Edwards and Hulme, 1.

[86] Biekart, 82-83.

[87] Mathews, 82.

(IAF), as well as donations from private citizens and charities.[88] The contributions of individual citizens and other international organizations have surpassed the contribution of any single government, giving NGOs more freedom to select their projects. The objectives of these individual citizens and organizations are to promote peace in areas of conflict and provide humanitarian support in regions of poverty. Private donors to NGOs sometimes have specific goals in mind that NGOs must fulfill. Media owner Ted Turner, for example, has given over $one billion to the United Nations for projects around the world.[89] Donors are more aware these days of world events, and want the organizations they support to get involved in areas important to them, such as democratization projects.[90]

The acceleration of the communications revolution has helped NGOs to disseminate their ideas and goals to the world and to potential donors. Increased global communications also have allowed NGOs to have more influence over governments since the end of the Cold War.[91] NGOs have been able to push even the most powerful governments of the world, such as the United States to make policies favorable to them.[92] This has been possible due to the influence that NGOs have been able to project via the media and constant lobbying of governments. International NGOs also have a physical presence in many countries, which allows them to lobby local governments and target a

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[88] Edwards and Hulme, 3.

[89] "Reinventing Diplomacy in the Information Age." CSIS Panel Report. (Washington: The Center for Strategy and International Studies, December 1998), 13.

[90] Biekart, 83.

[91] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, and Fuller, 39.

[92] Mathews, 82.

number of countries at once. About 50 percent of international NGOs have members in 25 countries, 20 percent have members in more than 50 countries, and only 11 percent have members in 8 or fewer countries.[93]

As non-state actors started to exploit global communications to disseminate vast amounts of propaganda and information, governments realized the importance of this trend and also the influence and power it gave the user.[94] These changes created what some scholars have called the "crisis triangle," composed of policy makers, humanitarian agencies, and the Western news media.[95] NGOs, in part due to their connections with policy makers, are now capable of generating negative or positive publicity regarding any country.[96] These NGOs are growing, and with them the influence they can have over government decisions. The nonprofit Association for Progressive Communications in the early 1990s provided Internet connections, support, and advice to about 50,000 NGOs.[97] NGOs have started to operate Internet programs in Nicaragua and other Central American countries as well.[98] Currently the Internet has over 100 million users; this number will reach one billion by 2005, and the Internet will be available to half the earth's population by 2010.[99]

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[93] John Boli, and George M. Thomas, "Constructing World Culture: International Nongovernmental Organizations since 1875." (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 20.

[94] Mathews, 81.

[95] Minear, Scott, and Weiss, 1.

[96] Mathews, 81.

[97] Mathews, 82.

[98] Biekart, 81.

[99] Reinventing Diplomacy in the Information Age, xi.

As a result of increasing numbers, diversity of funding, access to communication tools, and modification of superpower interest, we should expect to see NGOs have increasing influence over and involvement in insurgency conflicts. As NGOs become more involved in counterinsurgency related crisis, we shall see guerrillas become more dependent on NGOs, with changes in policies that reflect this dependency.

6. Communications Revolution

The acceleration of the communications revolution started in the mid 1980s and began to gain momentum in the late 1980s. The availability of new technologies revolutionized the relations of state and non-state actors. Information once controlled by a few elites became available to civilian organizations and individual citizens. Changes started to take effect in three key areas of communications.

Television stations started to spread to more cities and cover larger amounts of the population, which gave small communities and isolated towns access to timely information. Immigrants to the United States were able to keep up to date on events in their countries of origin and put pressure on the United States government to influence their home countries' leaders.

Radio stations emerged in every corner of the world and became linked to international news organizations. This development has enabled a larger segment of the population to obtain quality news services at relatively low prices, a situation that benefited the radio listeners in remote areas who previously lacked access to outside news sources.

Third, the price of computers and access to information started to go down.[100] The Internet became more available to the general public. As computers and Internet access became more widespread, non-state actors began to have more influence due to their involvement in the control and dissemination of information. One example, MSNBC, an Internet worldwide newscast service, has an average of 300,000 users a day.[101]

As a consequence of these changes, the communications revolution in the late 1980s and the early 1990s post-Cold War period brought drastic changes in the way that communications were transmitted around the world. Today, images and information are sent across the globe without respect to borders or socio-economic levels. Cybercash is a term used by many experts to identify money sent via Internet, a trend that is on the rise. The communications revolution phenomenon is one more factor that has to be taken into account when dealing with insurgents, who have embraced the changes in communications as one more weapon to fight with.[102]

Since the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the new communications revolution, governments are forced with fighting over who should have control of the media. The latest communications revolution has in some cases helped and in others harmed government officials' ability to control and distribute key information about policies for achieving peace, solutions to guerrilla conflicts, and of course plans to fight insurgents. In this period of rapid global communications, governments have become

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[100] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, and Fuller, 39.

[101] Reinventing Diplomacy in the Information Age, 8.

[102] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, and Fuller, 7.

more sensitive to the media than before. A new phrase has been coined, the "CNN effect," that describes the influence such news television networks as CNN have on domestic and foreign policies.[103] Television newscasts can now be watched on the computer, eliminating the need for television sets. The communications revolution has taken insurgent conflicts to a new level, to cyberspace. At issue is control of media access and coverage of the news.[104]

Latin American countries, like many other countries in the world, started to experience the effects of the current communications revolution on guerrilla movements. People in Latin America, like people in first world countries, are very susceptible to news reports. Television reaches the majority of the population and the Internet is growing in importance. As stated by Jorge G. Castañeda: "Latin America, despite its poverty and disparities, is now a full-scale media market: television reaches well over 80 percent of the homes in the more populous nations."[105]

It is important to mention that not all guerrillas have equal access to media sources such as television or the Internet. International support tends not to be as strong for these more isolated groups when compared to guerilla group with access to media outlets. On the other hand, some guerrillas do have access to the media or even home pages on the Internet, and yet they do not receive substantial international support. In order for insurgents to develop international support, in other words, their cause not only must be made public, but must also be compelling to the international community.

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[103] Reinventing Diplomacy in the Information Age, 7.

[104] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, and Fuller, 22.

[105] Castañeda, 389.

D. CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the nature and impact of international involvement in guerrilla conflicts during the Cold War and the early stages of the communications revolution. It has hypothesized about how the end of the Cold War, and the acceleration of the communications revolution, have shaped the interest and ability of international actors to influence current and future guerrilla conflicts.

The superpowers, and especially Latin American governments during the Cold War period, were able to suppress the information media and use coercion to control dissident reporters. Government control over media access, combined with the high cost of communications equipment, were a further barrier to the dissemination of information. The early communications revolution, therefore, had little effect on guerrilla movements, since these groups were not able to take advantage of it. During this period, however, insurgents were able to use the newspapers and radios to their advantage.

In the post-Cold War period, both insurgents and governments have changed their tactics and objectives because of two factors: there has been a shift in the types of international sponsors who are now providing the vast majority of economic support to adversaries in civil conflicts, and these supporters have different motives from the two Cold War superpowers. These changes have modified the interaction of insurgents and counterinsurgents in guerrilla conflicts.

The end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the communications revolution have helped the growth of NGOs, and increased the involvement of international actors such as the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and individual citizens. The agenda of these actors, from their goals to the means of achieving those goals, is

substantially different from that of the United States or the former Soviet Union in the Cold War. These transnational actors are ready to transform conflicts by requiring the participation of insurgents and counterinsurgents in peace talks. Because these organizations consider such conflicts to be due to internal rather than external social and economic problems, they have directed resources toward economic development of the countries involved.

The acceleration of the communications revolution has changed the nature of support for guerrilla organizations. Many NGOs share the ideas and goals of insurgents and help them to distribute information in order to obtain solutions to their concerns. NGOs have taken steps to stay up to date on communications technology and use it to their advantage.[106] The complex communications links that non-governmental organizations and the insurgent groups they support have created between them, have helped them react quickly to government actions. Insurgent organizations currently distribute electronic propaganda intended to win support from the international community and even from individual citizens.[107]

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[106] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, and Fuller, 117.

[107] Ibid., xi.

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III. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR INSURGENTS AND COUNTERINSURGENTS DURING THE COLD WAR AND POST-COLD WAR: THE CASE OF EL SALVADOR

A. INTRODUCTION

The Cold War period had a deep impact on Latin America countries, but its impact was felt with more force in countries that had insurgent guerrilla movements. One of the bloodiest guerrilla conflicts of this period took place in El Salvador. In addition to domestic factors, this conflict was fueled by foreign economic and political support during the Cold War period. After the Cold War ended, the nature of the conflict changed as a consequence of a shift in international support.

This chapter will illustrate how these changes in international support occurred and what was their impact on the conflict. As state actors (the United States and the Soviet Union) shifted interest in the conflict, non-state actors (international organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization of American States) started to gain more influence as they were filling the void left by the two superpowers.

Additionally, at the end of the Cold War, the acceleration of the communications revolution contributed to the Salvadoran peace process by allowing opposition voices to reach a wider national and international audience. More people became aware, through the introduction of 24 hour radio and television newscasts such as CNN, of the atrocities of the conflict and the impact of the war on the population. As a consequence of this access to information, the drive to find a solution to the conflict gained much greater support after the 1980s.

The Salvadoran conflict was transformed from a costly, drawn out guerrilla war to a quickly negotiated peace process as a consequence of the end of the Cold War and the communications revolution. This chapter focuses on the period from January 1981 to February 1992, when most of the fighting and peace negotiations occurred.[108]

The chapter is organized into two main sections: Cold War and post-Cold War. Each section analyzes national and international support for the two sides during the fighting, and the impact of the communications revolution on the conflict.

B. COLD WAR PERIOD

The Cold War had a devastating effect in El Salvador, with the two superpowers supporting opposite sides of an internal guerrilla war. The United States provided the Salvadoran government with about $3.6 billion during the 1980s.[109] The Soviet Union and its allies on the other hand, provided an estimated $1 billion of aid to the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) during the 12 years of the war.[110]

This was a period of insecurity and terror in El Salvador. The FMLN's insurrection imposed over $2 billion in economic damage and over $1.1 billion on infrastructure destruction.[111] Salvadorans migrated to the United States and neighboring countries as they fled the violence of their country, and an estimated 70,000 who stayed behind died as bystanders in the conflict.

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[108] William Stanley, "The Protection Racket State: Elite Politics, Military Exortion, and Civil War in El Salvador." (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 218.

[109] McClintock, 221.

[110] José Angel Moroni Bracamonte, and David E. Spenser, "Strategy and Tactics of the Salvadoran FMLN Guerrillas: Last Battle of the Cold War, Blueprint for Future Conflicts." (Westport: Praeger, 1995), 6.

[111] Stanley, 238.

This section will illustrate how the conflict was affected and supported by national and international factors. The government and insurgents had many choices at their disposal, but during the Cold War period they elected to fight. In this section I will point out the causes that made each side choose this option.

Domestic support was necessary and essential for the FMLN to start and to sustain its fight, but once it grew into an organization capable of challenging the government, its main economic and military supporters were external. Domestically, there were many persons and organizations that had a stake in the outcome of the conflict and provided support to insurgents and counterinsurgents. I will describe these actors and their actions in order to understand how the conflict might have evolved in the absence of international aid. Only in this way can the impact of international aid on the evolution of the conflict be evaluated.

1. Domestic Factors Affecting the Insurgency

The Salvadoran conflict had deep roots. The major guerrilla groups originated back in the 1960s and some even in the late 1940s, but they gained strength and supporters in the 1970s, for reasons that will be described in this section.

During the Cold War, the Salvadoran government faced many challenges that affected its behavior. Corrupt politicians and military personnel took advantage of the lower classes at this time and accumulated wealth at their expense.[112] The majority of presidential administrations from 1931 to 1979 lacked popular support because they were corrupt, oppressive, and had gained the presidency though coups or fraudulent elections.

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112 Yvon Grenier, "The Emergence of Insurgency in El Salvador: Ideology and Political Will." (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999), 40.

The government generally failed to develop domestic policies and lost popular support to such an extent that the masses turned their hopes to the guerrillas. Two developments furthered this trend. The Church started to organize the Christian Base Communities (CEBs), and the universities began to get more involved in the conflict.

Three key areas of government abuse, starting back in 1932 but becoming particularly acute during the 1970s, increased popular support for the guerrillas. First, coups and fraudulent elections were commonplace. Second, the government routinely suppressed protest with the use of violence. Third, a weak economy helped the FMLN to obtain internal support for its cause.

First of all, with coups and fraudulent elections commonplace in El Salvador, the middle class saw that their votes had no power. They did not have a voice in a political process that was getting steadily worse and began to feel alienated. As a result, this disaffected middle class began to form coalitions with other sectors of the society, such as peasants, teachers, students, and workers, to call for changes in the government.[113] The strongest political coalition was called "Unión Nacional Opositora" (National Opposition Union, UNO), under the leadership of José Napoleon Duarte of the Christian Democratic Party. This coalition won the 1972 elections, but the victory was overturned by the military.[114] The international community saw the 1972 election results as unfair, but most importantly the Salvadoran people also considered them fraudulent.

As the official party and its candidate, Colonel Arturo Armando Molina, were losing ground in early returns, the Salvadoran media were directed by the government to

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[113] Byrne, 41.

[114] Ibid, 25.

stop their coverage. The only election news made public after the order was given was to announce the winner, Colonel Molina, by a margin of 1.3 percent.[115] As people protested the results, they were put under arrest by government forces. A protest took place at the National University of El Salvador, which resulted in the closure of the University for two years. The new administration of President Molina lost student and professional support, key constituents of the middle class. In 1979, fraudulent elections again selected the next president, General Carlos Romero, who in turn was removed from the presidency by a coup on 15 October 1979. These recurring coups and fraudulent elections drove the middle class away from the government and closer to the FMLN. The FMLN grew in numbers and supporters, making its presence felt all over the country.

The second factor that drained support from the government was its ongoing practice of putting down political protests with violence. Abuses of power were common when putting down protests-for example, government use of airplanes and tanks to combat protesters at the National University. People were killed indiscriminately on the streets by state forces, giving the country the title of "the most severe state in the hemisphere."[116]

Third, throughout this period the country experienced instability and poor economic performance, which worsened by the 1970s. Sixty-eight percent of the population was undernourished, with only Guatemala and Haiti being poorer than El Salvador in the Western Hemisphere.[117] In 1961, only 19.8 percent of the population

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[115] McClintock, 105.

[116] Stanley. 3.

[117] Grenier, 13.

was without land, but by 1971, 41.1 percent of the population was landless.[118] These conditions resulted from the poor economic performance of the country, which forced many middle class families into poverty while the poor were getting poorer. During this period people began to lose faith in the government and look for alternatives; many selected the guerrillas.[119]

A key factor in the appeal of the FMLN for the population was the fact that it had local origins and initially got one hundred percent of its support domestically. The FMLN was officially formed on 10 October 1980, born out of El Salvador's Communist Party.[120] The majority of the leaders of the FMLN were members of the pro-Soviet Communist Party or the center-left Christian Democratic Party.[121] Most of the top FMLN commanders initiated their guerrilla careers at universities such as Joaquín Villalobos, Fernán Cienfuegos, Francisco Jovel, Jorge Shafik Handal, and Salvador Sánchez.[122]

Many national actors with links to the international community, such as the Catholic Church, also played a role in the conflict. The Catholic Church got involved with its youth groups and in the organization of Christian Base Communities which were essential in early guerrilla organization.[123] The first CEB was organized in 1969 in the region of Suchitoto, after which they started to spread to other regions, where their main

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[118] Byrne, 20.

[119] Stanley, 69.

[120] Grenier, 68.

[121] McClintock, 48.

[122] Grenier, 106.

[123] Cstañeda, 99.

goal was to make the poor aware of the Salvadoran situation.[124] These organizations were founded by Catholic priests who had strong ties to the majority Catholic population. As part of the Catholic Church, the CEBs had international aid and the support of international human rights organizations.

The Church also influenced the conflict through its ties to the Central American University, José Simeón Cañas.[125] Through its presence at the university, the Catholic Church tried to convert the students into instruments of social change and to foster commitment to their country.[126] Another form of Church influence was though political intervention, which the university experienced during the 1970s. It has been proven that the Church had close contact with the persons involved in the 1979 coup against General Carlos Roberto Romero.[127]

2. International Factors Affecting the Insurgency

a) American Interests and the Nature of U.S. Support to Counterinsurgents

The Salvadoran government had many options in dealing with the guerrillas. First, it could ignore them and wait to see what they were able to do. Second, the government could implement political, economic, and social reforms, which might have satisfied the guerrillas' demands. Third, it could fight the guerrillas. Salvadoran leaders selected the third option, due in part to the external political and economic

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[124] Grenier, 139.

[125] Ibid., 43.

[126] Ibid., 145.

[127] Ibid., 153.

support they received from the United States. The main interest of the Salvadoran government was to stay in power and keep ruling the country. The lack of an organized party with popular support that could defend the interests of the economic elite made democracy an initially unattractive alternative.

During the Cold War, the principal supporter of the counterinsurgent forces in El Salvador was the United States, especially after the victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1979. The main U.S. motive for supporting the Salvadoran government was to prevent a victory by insurgents with ties to international communism. U.S. leaders were afraid that any groups with links to communist organizations were dangerous, since they were just a step before the introduction of the Soviets and their agenda to Latin America. As the ex-guerrilla leader Joaquín Villalobos said, "In Latin America, any gorilla dictatorship that held fraudulent elections or was friendly to the United States was labeled a democracy."[128]

As American politicians and military personnel started to influence the conflict with direct and indirect aid, they had an impact in four key areas. First, they provided economic and military aid, which were essential to keep the government in power, especially in the early 1980s when a rebel victory was possible. Second, American politicians encouraged elections, which eventually proved essential in reducing public support for the guerrillas. Third, the U.S. Congress pushed the Salvadoran government into giving more attention to human rights. Fourth, American aid had a

[128] Castañeda, 377. Villalobos is using the term "Gorilla" to describe a person who took his/her position by power and keeps it by power, abuses, and brutality.

negative impact, in that it kept the Salvadoran government from implementing needed economic and social reforms.

First, the United States provided the Salvadoran government with political support, economic aid, and military supplies such as arms, ammunition, planes, and military advisors. Despite the many foreign policy differences between the Carter and Reagan administrations, both provided the Salvadoran government with the support it needed to fight the war, as Table 4 illustrates.

Table 4. United States Military and Economic Aid to El Salvador from 1979 to 1989 (Amount in millions of U.S. dollars)

Year	President	Economic	Military	Total Aid
1979	Carter	11	0	11
1980	Carter	58	6	64
1981	Reagan	114	36	150
1982	Reagan	182	82	264
1983	Reagan	246	81	327
1984	Reagan	216	197	413
1985	Reagan	434	136	570
1986	Reagan	323	122	445
1987	Reagan	463	112	575
1988	Reagan	314	82	396
1989	Reagan	307	81	388

Source: Cynthia McClintock, "Revolutionary Movements in Latin America: El Salvador's FMLN & Peru's Shinning Path." (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 22.

U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who assumed the presidency in 1977, attempted to save the Salvadoran government from communism by promoting reform. One way to encourage reform was to deny aid to governments that violated human rights. By the end of July 1977, General Carlos Roberto Romero's government had imprisoned, tortured, expelled or killed more than thirteen priests. In response to these recurrent human rights violations, Carter cut off aid.[129]

[129] Stanley, 109.

Once it was clear that the administration of General Romero was unwilling to reform, the Carter administration supported the coup that took place on 15 October 1979. A junta was formed to govern El Salvador, whose primary goal was to win the war against the left, administer land reform, and end human rights violations so that American aid would continue.[130] This policy had marginal results, since human right violations were still committed, such as the killings of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, four U.S. churchwomen, and more than 14,000 civilians during the remainder of the Carter administration.[131] The new Salvadoran junta nevertheless had the full support of Carter, even after his administration realized that it could not stop the human right violations of the Salvadoran military.[132] In 1980, the administration provided $64.5 million in financial aid, including $six million in military aid.[133] The use of economic and military aid to contain communism in El Salvador was escalated in the next U.S. presidential administration.

Although Carter's human rights policy did not succeed due to internal American pressures to keep El Salvador from becoming another Nicaragua, Carter did keep the Salvadoran government from collapsing in the short run. Without his support, in late 1979 the U.S. Embassy and Southern Command assessed that the Salvadoran government would fall.[134]

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[130] Ibid., 60.

[131] Stanley, 268.

[132] Byrne, 65.

[133] Ibid., 102.

[134] Byrne, 56.

When Ronald Reagan assumed the presidency in 1981, he renewed economic and military aid to the Salvadoran government and at the same time requested a situation report on El Salvador from General Fred Woerner.[135] The report criticized the low amount of aid being given and emphasized the necessity for immediate increases in order to counter the strong communist forces in El Salvador and their external supporters. This report provided the Reagan administration with the means to obtain more assistance from the U.S. Congress. Although Congress granted the aid, it required that reports on human rights violations be made to it every six months starting in 1981. This report had to include all changes and advances regarding the Salvadoran conflict, especially advances on human rights.

The Woerner report allowed the Reagan administration to justify an increase in economic and military aid from 1981 to 1984, including provision of fixed-wing military aircraft and helicopters. The Woerner report was essential to maintain the Salvadoran government's fight against the rebellion and to keep the government in power during the heavy FMLN attacks of the early 1980s. Although in today's terms the aid may not seem to be much money, it should be borne in mind that El Salvador is only 8,260 square miles or about the size of Massachusetts, and during the 1980s had no more than five million habitants.[136] With the economic support of the United States, the number of active duty military personnel in the Salvadoran army rose from 12,000 in

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[135] Wickham-Crowley, 211.

[136] Grenier, 73.

1980 to 42,000 in 1984, a key change that prevented an FMLN victory during their heavy counter-offensive of 1983.[137]

In mid-1983, President Ronald Reagan commissioned the Bipartisan Commission on Central America, headed by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, to assess the situation in El Salvador.[138] The Kissinger report came out in January 1984 with a plea for more help to the Salvadoran government. The report was a cornerstone of the campaign for Salvadoran aid, since it was written by a bipartisan congressional commission and asked for more money to help the Salvadoran government in its fight against the FMLN. The report was able to provide justification for an increase of economic aid but also highlighted the need for democracy in El Salvador. It thus helped to convince Congress of the urgency and necessity of assistance to the Salvadoran government. The administration received 91.5 percent of what was requested from Congress, for a total of $1.848 billion of aid to the Salvadoran government from 1985 to 1989.[139] This economic help was important in keeping the economy of El Salvador from collapse due to heavy FMLN attacks on infrastructure during the second half of the 1980s.

At the urging of the American government and to keep the money flowing, Salvadoran officials started programs to win the hearts and minds of the peasants. In 1986, the Salvadoran government launched the "Unidos Para Reconstruir" (United to Reconstruct) program. This initiative was implemented in all fourteen

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[137] Byrne, 80.

[138] Ibid., 97.

[139] Ibid., 142.

Salvadoran departments and was designed to create civil-defense groups and reconstruct destroyed infrastructure.

During this period, the Salvadoran military grew from 42,000 in 1984 to 56,000 in 1987. The Reagan administration was very effective in fighting the guerrillas and in providing support to the government. The United States also sent military advisors who provided essential guerrilla warfare training to the existing military units and to new recruits. Some of the best Salvadoran military officers received training at the U.S. Army School of the Americas, located at Fort Benning, Georgia. American military officers also provided help to Salvadoran pilots in the tactical use of military helicopters and planes against guerrillas. The American military advisors were essential in keeping the guerrillas from obtaining victory.

The second major impact the United States had on the Salvadoran conflict was to promote fair elections. In the 1980s elections became a key component of U.S. policy in El Salvador.[140] This had a major impact on the Salvadoran people as it increased trust in the possibility of a democratic system. The Carter administration supported the 1980 midterm and presidential elections, while the Reagan administration supported the 1983, 1986, and 1989 midterm elections and the 1985 presidential elections.

The mid-1980s provided a transitional period of electoral processes; although the elections still had some problems, such as inflated results and double voting, these abnormalities were less then before. The political coalitions of the 1970s began to lose strength as the middle class began to notice changes in the political and electoral

systems. The 1985 elections prove to be very important for the people's trust in the government's will to have fair elections. The Duarte government gave permission for opposition leaders to return to El Salvador and also established amnesty for rebels.[141] These changes in government policies, in conjunction with a reduction of electoral discrepancies, generated a positive response from the people, as shown by the number of voters, which was perceived as high.[142] In the 1988 midterm elections, there were approximately 1.65 million registered voters, and of those 69 percent turned out to vote.[143] The American efforts paid by increasing the credibility of progress towards a democratic system, which in the post-Cold War period proved crucial to the peace process.

Third, although human rights abuses were still committed during the 1970s and early 1980s, there was a change in the 1980s. The number of abuses remained steady and in some cases went down. In 1983, for example, 1,286 deaths were attributed to the Salvadoran military death squads, but in 1984 the number went down to 225, and to 146 in 1985.[144] This was a result of the U.S. president's push for human rights protection from the Salvadoran military. Despite the decline, the U.S. was not fully successful in preventing abuses, in large part because the Salvadoran government realized that the threat of a communist state would keep the U.S. from denying aid based on human right violations.

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[140] Stanley, 231.

[141] Byrne, 139.

[142] McClintock, 224.

[143] Ibid., 122.

[144] Ibid., 117.

Fourth, a negative impact of U.S. aid was to stifle initiatives from the Salvadoran government. Salvadoran leaders began to pursue some civic action programs, but they were less than effective since the government had few incentives to change. Officials had a constant flow of money, and Salvadoran economic activity was concentrated in the cities, which were to some extent controlled by the government. In March 1980, for example, the junta in power announced a program of agrarian reform, which, although it looked good on paper was never carried out because the government's use of the U.S aid, which was focused on fighting the guerrillas.[145]

During the Cold War, in the late 1970s and 1980s, American military and economic aid kept the Salvadoran government from collapsing. The repressive and abusive governments of the 1970s, including the overturn of the 1972 elections, were possible due to the external aid and support given by the United States. The survival of the government during heavy attacks by the FMLN also was possible due to U.S. aid. While the U.S. intent was focused on the guerrillas, it was an obstacle in the promotion of social and economic programs, since it offered little incentive for the Salvadoran government to change.

b) Communist States, their Interests, and the Nature of their Support to Insurgents

During the Cold War the FMLN guerrillas had many options at their disposal, some of which changed with time or were not available during specific periods. First, the guerrillas might have surrendered when their initial 1981 offensive failed. Second, the FMLN could have tried to carry out a political campaign with the help of the

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[145] Byrne, 60.

Frente Democrático Revolucionario (Revolutionary Democratic Front, FDR) in 1987. Third, the FMLN could elect to fight until the end. They chose the third option just as did the government, and as in the previous section, I argue that this choice was a consequence of the guerrillas external political supporters and steady supply of aid. They also elected this option due to the government's unwillingness to negotiate or to make economic or social reforms, which gave the FMLN additional national support.

The FMLN had the backing of a world superpower and its satellite countries, which affected the Salvadoran conflict throughout the Cold War. It is estimated that the FMLN received about $1 billion from communist block countries during the 1980s, making it the best-funded guerrilla organization in Latin America. This aid helped them to sustain their prolonged war.[146] The primary interest of the FMLN was to destroy the current government and install a socialist government in El Salvador. They were tired of waiting for changes and receiving false promises from the government.

During the Cold War, the Salvadoran insurgents had support in three key areas: funding, training, and leadership. First, the Soviet Union and its satellite countries provided financial support and military supplies to the insurgents. By 1984, for example, Libyan Colonel Muamar Gaddafi had given over $two million of the $four million he had promised to the FMLN.[147] Second, military training to FMLN troops was also provided by the Soviet Union, Cuba, Nicaragua, Vietnam, and Eastern Europe.[148] Third,

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[146] Moroni Bracamonte and Spenser, 6.

[147] Wells, 107.

[148] McClintock, 61.

leadership skills and political support were provided by Cuba and Nicaragua. As stated by Cynthia McClintock: "Meetings among the FMLN commanders, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega, and Cuban Dictator Fidel Castro were common."[149]

Military supplies were able to reach the insurgents during the Cold War period in abundance. Many socialist countries gave weapons to the FMLN, and it is estimated that between 1980 and 1982, the FMLN obtained up to 10,000 small arms.[150] These amounts of arms enabled FMLN soldiers to have up to two pieces each. The first country to provide arms to the FMLN was Ethiopia, via Czechoslovakia and given by Cuba.[151] The largest amount of weapons, however, came from Vietnam, in the form of M-16s left behind by the United States in 1975 after the Vietnam War ended. These M-16s were very useful since the Salvadoran government used the same weapons, and the insurgents could steal and use their ammunition.[152] East Germany gave uniforms and medicine to the guerrillas, which were essential to keeping a fit force.[153]

Nicaragua provided a safe path for supplies: over 70% of the arms and ammunitions coming from abroad reached the FMLN via Nicaragua.[154] Nicaragua also provided safe-havens for the leaders of the FMLN.[155] FMLN forces would cross the

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[149] Ibid, 60.

[150] Castañeda, 97.

[151] Ibid., 98.

[152] Ibid.

[153] Wells, 107.

[154] Sereseres, 176

[155] McClintock, 60.

border into Nicaragua or Honduras, where the Salvadoran army could not go.[156] These border areas were known as "bolsones." The bolsones were very important, because they provided the forces that used them a safe haven to rest, regroup, and train.

The bipolar conflict of the Cold War provided the FMLN with all the military hardware, economic support, and training necessary to fight a prolonged war. They had sufficient weapons and ammunition to launch major military operations, such as the offensive of 10 January 1981. The FMLN continued to attack the Salvadoran economic structure heavily during the 1980s, until they lost their external support at the end of the Cold War. Their goal was to counter the impact of the economic aid the government was receiving from the United States, to the point at which the aid would not be sufficient to repair the damage caused by the insurgents.[157] Without the external support the FMLN was receiving, it is likely that the government, with its abundant aid from the United States, would have been able to crush the insurgents.

c) International Community

The international community was involved in the Salvadoran conflict during the Cold War, but its involvement was negligible when compared to the influence of the Soviet Union and the United States. Even other western nations that wanted to get involved had no appreciable impact. France and Mexico tried to force the Salvadoran government to recognize the FMLN as a viable political opposition in 1981, when they declared the FMLN a "representative political force," but without result.[158] The

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[156] Stanley, 221.

[157] Byrne, 100.

[158] Ibid., 95.

influence of these countries was minimal because U.S. influence was dominant in the region and U.S. politicians opposed any foreign intervention in Latin America unless it was in accordance with U.S. policy in the region. The Contadora countries (Colombia, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela) tried to bring peace to the region, but were not capable of finding a peaceful solution to the conflict.[159] Under the leadership of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Costa Rica and Nicaragua drafted the peace plans of Esquipulas I in May 1986, and Esquipulas II in August 1987. These plans were not actually put into effect until the last years of the Cold War. Mexico had an inconsequential impact when it recognized the FMLN in 1981, and also in 1984 when it upgraded its diplomatic representation to El Salvador.[160] The early 1990s saw the emergence of Latin American influence in El Salvador because the end of the Cold War allowed the environment necessary for the implementation of peace treaties.

International NGOs before 1989 mainly were involved in humanitarian endeavors and not in peace negotiations. They participated in humanitarian missions to El Salvador, such as providing aid in the aftermath of the 1989 earthquake. Other organizations specialized in providing medical aid, such as the U.S. based "Medical Aid for El Salvador," that provided over $5 million in medicines, equipment, and personnel during the 1980s.[161] Humanitarian agencies sent observers into El Salvador, but their role and importance were minimal during this period. Some NGOs did get more politically involved in El Salvador's civil war, despite the difficulties. The British NGO

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[159] Arnson, 260-1.

[160] Byrne, 95.

[161] McClintock, 62.

"El Salvador Solidarity Campaign" was founded in 1980 to provide solidarity with FMLN-associated organizations fighting for a negotiated settlement in the political and social arenas.[162] The FMLN also received limited economic support during the 1980s from other countries in Europe, through its political front "Frente Democrático Revolucionario" (Revolutionary Democratic Front, or FDR) that was formed in April 1980. In 1982, the West German program "Arms for El Salvador" raised approximately $2 million, which was given to the Popular Forces of Liberation (FPL).[163] The main goal of the FPL was to unify all leftist parties and organizations in El Salvador to make a stronger front against the government.[164]

FDR support for the FMLN diminished towards the end of the 1980s for two reasons. First, the FDR and its supporters started to worry about the human rights violations being committed by the FMLN and did not want to lose the opportunity to participate in the opening of peace negotiations.[165] Second, as elections became cleaner and the international community moved to include the FDR, FDR leaders embraced elections as the best path to follow in order to change the country.

d) Communications Revolution

During the Cold War, the global communications revolution started to gain momentum. Within El Salvador, restrictions on freedom of the press and lack of an

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[162] British Overseas for Development. Available [Online]<http://www.bond.org.uk/links/reg.html. [23 July 2000].

[163] Michael J. Waller, "The Third Current of Revolution: Inside the North American Front of El Slavador's Guerrilla War." (Lanham: University Press of America, 1991), 108.

[164] McClintock, 52.

[165] Ibid., 52-3.

extensive communications network minimized the revolution's impact. The FMLN had a strong propaganda campaign, however and obtained positive results with it, such as winning more supporters. Their international campaign also was very important, and it played a key role in bringing the conflict to the attention of the rest of the world.

The FMLN's domestic propaganda program was well organized and had a meaningful impact. Through their radio station "Radio Venceremos," the FMLN broadcast to all of El Salvador, with an emphasis on obtaining more internal support and disseminating their agenda. The newspaper "Venceremos" also was used to disseminate the FMLN's goals and plans for El Salvador and to advertise their victories. The FMLN distributed its publications and propaganda, such as *Revolutionary Strategy in El Salvador, Why Is the FMLN Fighting?* and *Women and War in El Salvador*, outside of El Salvador as well.[166] The FMLN also obtained support through films like "Time of Daring," made for recruitment purposes. Some FMLN films were viewed at Joseph Papp's Latino Festival in New York during the 1980s.[167]

The government also used the communications revolution to its advantage as it was able to carryout a media propaganda. The Reagan administration, through the CIA, gave $1.4 million to the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) in the 1984 elections. With this money, the PDC's campaign was able to prevent the victory of the left ARENA candidate Roberto d'Aubuisson.[168]

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[166] Cristina Meyer, "Underground Voices: Insurgent Propaganda in El Salvador, Nicaragua and Peru." (Santa Monica: RAND, 1991), 3.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Byrne, 94.

C. POST-COLD WAR PERIOD

This section on the post-Cold War environment will illustrate how the Salvadoran conflict was influenced and supported by outside actors with different goals and interests from those of the Cold War period. The government and insurgents, as in the Cold War, had many choices at their disposal, but this time both selected peace instead of conflict, for various reasons. Without a strong socialist backer to help the FMLN once the Soviet Union had collapsed, the guerrillas had to rely on their domestic and other international supporters, the majority of whom now advocated a peaceful solution to the conflict.

U.S. support to the Salvadoran government also changed and came with a new agenda. The Bush administration wanted to reach a peace agreement in El Salvador, which obligated Salvadoran leaders to change tactics and the direction of the conflict. The following sections will look into the domestic factors, then the international factors, which affected the conflict and its final outcome.

1. Domestic Factors Affecting the Insurgency

As the Cold War was ending in 1989, very important changes were taking place in El Salvador. The 1989 FMLN offensive brought the civil war to the cities at the same time that the government held the cleanest elections the country had ever had, bringing the victory of ARENA candidate Alfredo Cristiani.[169] The government came back into favor, and in 1990 for the first time in the conflict, polls favoring a peace settlement reached 60 percent.[170]

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[169] Ibid., 141.

[170] Chistopher Marquis, "Key Issues Block Salvador Peace." *Miami Herald*, (6 November 1990), 5A.

The cleaner elections of the mid-1980s made it possible for the ARENA party to represent both the elite and the people in a viable democracy.[171] The business community during this period was looking for ways to modernize and compete in the world market, but in order to achieve this goal, the war had to end. The government lost the support of the economic elite for continued fighting. The FMLN's attacks on infrastructure in the 1980s made new investments almost impossible, while El Salvador's international image scared away outside investors.[172] ARENA candidate Alfredo Cristiani was a businessman who represented this view. Fifty-five percent of an estimated 1.8 million voters assisted at the voting booths.[173] The new government started to seek peace negotiations with the FMLN right away. Cristiani's new administration obtained more domestic support than previous administrations, which gave it a legitimacy not enjoyed by its predecessors. These changes were very important for the FMLN's decision to negotiate with the government.

FMLN leaders carried out the 1989 offensive with the erroneous idea that it would generate a popular uprising and enable them to overthrow the government.[174] The offensive, which began in November, was seen by Salvadorans as a desperate attempt to win support, however, and had no positive results. People were repelled by its cruelty, destruction of infrastructure, and attacks on the civilian population. More than 1,000 civilians were killed by the FMLN as a consequence of this final offensive, while

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[171] Stanley, 240.

[172] Ibid.

[173] McClintock, 122.

[174] Byrne, 161.

infrastructure damage was estimated to be as much as $120 million.[175] As the political situation started to change, FMLN leaders realized that they had to change their strategy and give the movement a political voice in order to have more power in future peace negotiations.[176]

The FDR also cut its aid to the FMLN and redirected resources toward support of the democratic process as a means to achieve power. FDR leaders Guillermo Ungo and Ruben Zamora returned to politics to participate in the 1989 electoral campaign.[177] The new policies of the FMLN and FDR emphasized the next step in the political process, which was to reach a peaceful solution to the civil war through elections, and to try to obtain as many concessions as possible for their cause.

2. International Factors Affecting the Insurgency

a) American Interests and the Nature of U.S. Support to Counterinsurgents

At the end of the Cold War in 1989, the United States government and the American people saw the Salvadoran conflict differently from how they had viewed it before 1989. As the bipolar system and the threat of communist intervention in El Salvador ended, U.S. politicians began to see the conflict as internal to El Salvador instead of an effort to establish a Soviet satellite.[178] The U.S. government recognized that it could begin to do more to prevent human rights violations in El Salvador, and Salvadoran leaders saw for the first time that they could actually lose support if they did

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[175] Ibid., 153.

[176] Ibid., 162.

[177] Waller, 65.

[178] Byrne, 174.

not respect the conditions stipulated in the aid packages.[179] The most notorious incident occurred on 16 November 1989, when the rector of the Jesuit-run Central American University was murdered along with five other priests and two workers. The murders were attributed to the Salvadoran military after the confessions of some of the military members involved in the operation. This event triggered serious debates in the U.S. Congress concerning Salvadoran aid and the Salvadoran government's ongoing violations of human rights. The Bush administration focused more attention on the way aid given to the Salvadoran government was being used. Congress also was less willing to finance the war in El Salvador and put pressure on Cristiani's administration to stop human rights abuses, or lose further U.S. aid. [180] Congress did in fact, begin to reduce aid to El Salvador in the late 1980s.[181]

Table 5. United States Total Aid to El Salvador after 1989
(Economic and Military Aid in Millions of U.S. dollars)

Year	Total Aid
1987	462.86
1988	314.10
1989	307.04
1990	246.72
1991	227.75
1992	268.70
1993	213.67
1994	56.13
1995	62.57
1996	77.44
1997	29.96

Source: "1998 Latin America and the Caribbean Selected Economic and Social Data," (United States Agency for International Development, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, Washington, D.C., 1998), p. 216.

[179] Ibid., 169.

[180] Stanley, 247.

[181] Byrne, 181.

As a consequence of U.S. aid reduction, the Salvadoran government realized that it would need to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict. As one indicator of this change of view, 1990 was the first time that a Salvadoran military officer was prosecuted for an act of political violence.[182]

President Bush embraced the administration of Alfredo Cristiani, which immediately after taking power initiated peace negotiations with the FMLN in September 1989.[183] This proved to be a major step in promoting democracy in El Salvador, and it sent a wave of hope through the international community that progress was being made towards a peace settlement. Bush was now invested in finding an accelerated peaceful resolution to the Salvadoran conflict. To maintain neutrality and promote positive peace negotiations, in 1992 the Bush administration gave its backing to UN-sponsored peace talks between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government, at the Center for Development and Policy in Cocoyoc, Mexico.[184]

b) Communist Actors, their Interests, and the Nature of their Support to Insurgents

The FMLN made an ideological shift from Marxism-Leninism to a more moderate social-democratic doctrine during this period.[185] As stated by author Yvon Grenier: "The FMLN's ideological shift, whether genuinely felt or promoted by the circumstances, was no doubt influenced by the collapse of the socialist bloc..."[186] Cuba

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[182] Stanley, 230.

[183] Byrne, 174.

[184] Castañeda, 307.

[185] Grenier, 92.

[186] Ibid.

in turn could no longer provide help to Nicaragua or the FMLN in El Salvador, since the little help it now was receiving was used internally. Another event that urged the FMLN to obtain peace was the Sandinistas' electoral defeat in 1990, which further diminished their international support. The only significant military attack the FMLN was able to carry out after the flow of aid was reduced was the 1989 attack on the capital. While the offensive's main objective failed, it did help the insurgents gain some political strength, which was crucial during the forthcoming peace negotiations.

The guerillas could make use only of the arms and ammunitions they had in stock. The biggest contribution made by their former supporters came from Nicaragua, which donated surface-to-air missiles (SA-14s) to the FMLN in late 1990. These systems, sent by Sandinista military leaders without the knowledge of the Chamorro government, gave the FMLN a bargaining chip for obtaining concessions during the peace talks.

The FMLN found itself relying on support from different actors who were not interested in overthrowing the government, but preferred a negotiated end to the conflict. The insurgent leaders needed to come to the bargaining table and work for their goals in the new political environment.[187] In order to obtain the backing they needed, the FMLN began to form coalitions with the economic elite and professional politicians to win concessions in peace negotiations.

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[187] Wickham-Crowley, 286.

c) International Community

Not until the final phase of the Cold War was the international community able to influence the Salvadoran conflict.[188] As William Stanley notes, "International actors began to play an increasingly important role in encouraging a negotiated solution."[189]

Once the Cold War had ended, the United Nations, no longer deadlocked by the United States and the Soviet Union, became the main peace mediators in El Salvador. It began to function as it was designed, as stated by the scholar Teresa Whitefield: "The United Nations of the Salvadoran Process was riding the crest of a wave. As it emerged from decades of Cold War paralysis, the organization appeared ideally placed to take on the role of world troubleshooter."[190] As the United Nations became more involved and influential in 1991, the amount of economic support it provided to El Salvador for the peace process started to increase, as shown in Table 6.

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[188] Arnson, 262.

[189] Stanley, 251.

[190] Arnson, 258.

Table 6. United Nations Total Aid to El Salvador
(Amount in millions of U.S. dollars)

Year	Total Aid
1987	4.93
1988	5.33
1989	7.23
1990	8.36
1991	7.66
1992	14.16
1993	21.44
1994	23.62
1995	15.82
1996	27.37
1997	Not available.

Source: "1998 Latin America and the Caribbean Selected Economic and Social Data," (United States Agency for International Development, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, Washington, D.C., 1998), p. 233.

The United Nations, with the help of Latin American nations, convinced the Salvadoran government and the insurgents to engage in peace negotiations.[191] The National Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (COPAZ), formed in September 1991 in New York, led to a final peace agreement acceptable to both sides, with the mediation of the United Nations. In mid-November 1991, the FMLN suspended all its operations in order to sign the peace agreements.[192] The Peace Accord, which was signed in 1992, was possible in part due to the hard work of the United Nations.[193]

Similarly, other Latin American countries were able to become influential in the Salvadoran conflict after the end of Cold War. The governments of Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela did help and were instrumental to the success of the peace

[191] Loveman and Davis, 412.

[192] Byrne, 188.

[193] Arnson, 69.

process.[194] Mexico provided advice to both the government and guerrillas during the peace talks, and it participated as an intermediary for continuing negotiations between the two sides. As a result of the hard work of the group of "friends" (Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, and Spain) of the UN Secretary-General, the FMLN was forced to accept a ceased fire, put its demands on the table, and later to modify those demands.[195] The United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), although a United Nations operation, was born on 20 May 1991 out of the initiative of Latin American nations during talks in San Jose, Costa Rica in July 1990, and Mexico City in April 1991.[196] This commission was in charge of verifying the human rights agreements made by both sides. ONUSAL participated in talks between the Salvadoran government and the FMLN under the auspices of several Latin American nations, leading to United Nations Security Council Resolution 693.[197] ONUSAL represented Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Guyana, Mexico, Venezuela, and other countries outside the hemisphere but with strong ties to Latin America, such as Italy and Spain. On 31 January 1992, a group of 368 mostly Latin American soldiers and civilians wearing United Nations colors were deployed to El Salvador.[198]

Non-governmental organizations also started to influence the Salvadoran conflict at the end of the Cold War in many ways. The Salvadoran government needed

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[194] Byrne, 182.

[195] Ibid., 182-5.

[196] Ibid.

[197] ONUSAL. Available [Online]<http://un.org/Depts/DPKO/Missions/onusal_b.htm. [17 April 2000].

[198] "The United Nations and El Salvador:1990-1995." (New York: Department of Public Information, United Nations, 1995), 25.

aid from NGOs, and therefore was forced to accept some of their suggestions to change certain social programs or start new ones. This opening led many international agencies to get involved in helping the government to modernize El Salvador's political, economic, and social structures. At the same time, other organizations were helping the FMLN become involved in the political life of El Salvador. In 1993, the Danish NGO "MS" (Mellemfolkelight Samvirke), for example, opened an office in El Salvador whose purpose was, among others, the promotion of democratic values.[199] Other NGOs came in to help the general population with political organization and the formation of labor unions. One of these, "Peace Works," opened an office in El Salvador in 1992 to support the land reform process.[200] Several organizations started to invest money in the building of new infrastructure to replace what was destroyed during the war. FIDAMERICA was established in 1992, with a projected life span of 6 years, to invest over $17 million in the support of urban business.[201]

European countries also had more influence in El Salvador towards the end of the Cold War. The European Development Fund started to provided significant amounts of aid to El Salvador, as Table 7 shows.

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[199] Denmark NGOs. Available [Online]<http://denmerk.org.ni/Danish ngos.html. [23 July 2000].

[200] Peace Works. Available [Online]<http://www.peaceworks.org/peaceworks/html. [23 July 2000].

[201] FIDAMEICA. Available. [Online]<http://www.fidamerica.cl/html. [23 July 2000].

Table 7. European Development Fund Total Aid to El Salvador
(Amount in millions of U.S. dollars)

Year	Total Aid
1987	4.54
1988	3.36
1989	3.69
1990	6.10
1991	10.99
1992	23.77
1993	42.97
1994	24.82
1995	22.74
1996	29.98
1997	Not available.

Source: "1998 Latin America and the Caribbean Selected Economic and Social Data," (Washington, D.C: United States Agency for International Development, Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, 1998), 233.

In addition to financial aid, European countries were also giving advice to the government and insurgents on how to reach a peaceful end to the conflict. FMLN leaders who went to Europe to obtain support in May 1988 were urged to start negotiating for peace with the government, while government officials were lobbied to make social and economic changes.[202] European leaders wanted policies enacted that would reflect some of the causes for which the insurgents were fighting. This support brought results in 1989 when the FMLN encouraged supporters to vote for the Democratic Convergence, composed of the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR), and the Popular Social Christian Movement (MPSC).[203]

[202] Stanley, 242.

[203] Ibid.

d) Communications Revolution

The acceleration of the communications revolution in the late 1980s played an important part in making people outside El Salvador aware of the guerrilla conflict and its consequences for the general population. New communications systems and tools came into use. In El Salvador, television and newspapers were the most important media.

The U.S. political agenda changed in the late 1980s, in part due to media influence. The increased coverage of the Salvadoran conflict by television networks and newspapers affected how U.S. politicians drafted policies towards El Salvador in the new world environment. 1989 represents an important year for the conflict in terms of key events and the importance of the communications revolution. During this year, more Latin American stories were published in the foreign press than any previous year during the Cold War.

Newspapers also were very active after the Cold War in El Salvador. Between 1989 and 1991, almost half (49.2%) of the stories out of El Salvador published in the United States were combat related.[204] In that same period, U.S. television networks broadcast more war stories from Latin America (30.4% of all Latin American stories) than any other topic.[205]

The communications revolution did have an impact in disseminating news about the Salvadoran conflict to the world. Some newspapers mounted a massive campaign to disseminate news about the atrocities and abuses of power that the

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204 Spephen Hess, "International News & Foreign Correspondents." (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1996), 129.

Salvadoran military was committing. This global access to information helped put pressure on politicians, especially in Latin America, to put an end to the conflict.

D. CONCLUSION

During the Cold War, Salvadoran counterinsurgents and insurgents had the support of the two superpowers. They were engaged in a war with no end, fueled by seemingly endless supplies of money and resources from their international supporters. At the end of the Cold War, both sides in the conflict had to alter their strategies due to the changes in their primary supporters.

The principal change that led to the peace process was the rise in importance of international organizations that supported a peaceful solution. The Soviet Union ceased to exist and so did its support to insurgents. The United States began limiting its support to the governments and putting restrictions on it. These events created an opening for other actors to step in and exert influence on the situation.

The international community, including the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, individual citizens, and, most importantly, other Latin American nations, took advantage of the new arrangement and increased their involvement in the conflict. To the extent that the United States remained interested in El Salvador, its interest now coincided with that of the international community, in seeking peace.

The end of the Cold War changed attitudes and resources. The United States was now willing to stop aid if the Salvadoran government would not cooperate. U.S. politicians became concerned with human rights violations. The international community

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[205] Ibid., 127.

had a new agenda with which the insurgents and counterinsurgents had to comply in order to receive support. A peace settlement was worked out in part due to the influence of the international community.

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IV. INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR INSURGENTS AND COUNTERINSURGENTS DURING THE COLD WAR AND POST-COLD WAR: THE CASE STUDY OF MEXICO

A. INTRODUCTION

On 1 January 1994, an armed group of peasants and Indians attacked the rural towns of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Ocosingo, Altamirano, and Las Margaritas in the state of Chiapas in Mexico. This armed group called itself the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN), named after Emiliano Zapata, leader of the 1910 Mexican Revolution in southern Mexico. This was the first time the Mexican army was involved in heavy frontal battles with its own citizens since the Tlatelolco incident of 1968, in which the army killed thousands of students during a student demonstration.[206] The armed rebellion in this obscure part of Mexico sent shock waves around the world. Within minutes of the uprising's beginning, word of it was on the international news.[207] The Zapatistas initiated their struggle on the first day of entry into force of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and caused extensive initial damage to the Mexican economic, political, and social systems by scaring off investors and creating political turmoil.[208] The Mexican economy collapsed and the United States had to intervene with an economic aid package to save it.

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[206] Fuentes, "A New Time For Mexico," 89.

[207] George A. Collier, and Elizabeth Lowery Quaratiello, "Basta: Land & The Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas." (Oakland: Food First Books, 1999), 53.

[208] Michael Conroy, "Reflections." In "Comparative Peace Process in Latin America." Cynthia A. Arnson, eds. (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999), 154.

The EZLN was the first guerrilla organization to challenge a government in post-Cold War Latin America, and it behaved differently from the old Cold War guerrilla groups.[209] The Zapatistas initiated their struggle with armed battles just like any other guerrilla group, but they suddenly and quickly changed tactics from armed fighting to political negotiations. EZLN leaders used the communications revolution to their advantage, and due to their positive propaganda obtained international support in a relatively very short period of time.

The Mexican government responded to this guerrilla group in a way never seen before, it allowed the group to survive. The guerrillas obtained international support through publicity, at a time when Mexico was cultivating international support for NAFTA. The Mexican government first learned about the Zapatistas in 1990 from the interior's Ministry of Intelligence.[210] The government decided not to get involved in a fight against any guerrilla group, however, because NAFTA was being negotiated and it did not want negative publicity that could jeopardize the new treaty. International supporters such as NGOs and even the United States pressured the Mexican government into accepting a political solution in a way never seen before in Mexico.[211] The Mexican government did not crush the Zapatistas, but instead negotiated with them.

The Zapatistas took advantage of the new world security environment brought by the end of the Cold War, in which the communist threat was gone and guerrilla groups

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209 Carlos Fuentes, "Chiapas: Latin America's First Post-Communist Rebellion." *New perspective Quarterly,* (Vol 11, No. 2, Spring 1994), 56.

210 Andres Oppenheimer, "Bordering on Chaos: Guerrilla, Stockbrokers, Politicians, and Mexico's Road to Prosperity." (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 34.

were no longer seen as satellites of the communist block. Zapatista leaders also took full advantage of the benefits obtained by the communications revolution. Their message was heard in the most remote areas of Mexico and the world within hours of their uprising, which enabled them to obtain the national and international support necessary to survive and disseminate their ideas peacefully.[212]

In this chapter I will illustrate how the Zapatista National Liberation Army has adapted and differs in many ways from the old guerrilla movements of Latin America. This guerrilla group existed during the Cold War but started to act differently after the end of the Cold War.

The chapter is divided chronologically into two sections. The first section will cover the Cold War period, and explain the domestic and international factors that prevented the Zapatista guerrillas from flourishing in Mexico. The second section covers the post-Cold War period and will show the domestic and international changes that allowed this guerrilla group to survive and not be suppressed by the Mexican government as others had been.

B. COLD WAR PERIOD

The two major actors in this conflict during the Cold War were the Zapatista National Liberation Army and the Mexican government. The EZLN was founded on 17 November 1983, but had its roots in much older groups that had been active since the

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211 Neil Harvey, "The Peace Process in Chiapas: Between Hope and Frustation." In "Comparative Peace Process in Latin America." Cynthia A. Arnson, eds. (Washington: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 1999), 132.

212 Conroy, 154.

1960s.[213] The Zapatistas originally were part of the National Liberation Forces (NLF), a group that was born on 6 August 1960.[214] The NLF moved guerrilla cells to Chiapas in 1980 and organized a rural armed front, which was named the Zapatista National Liberation Front, under the leadership of Subcommandante Marcos, who had been involved in guerrilla warfare since the 1970s.[215] Although the Zapatistas were not able to create an uprising during the Cold War, they did start to gain momentum and local supporters in the late 1980s. This influx of supporters was due to the creation of church-organized grass roots movements and the effects of Mexico's entry into the world economy. As Mexico entered the world market, Mexican peasants started to feel its negative effects, raising discontent that the guerrillas were able to exploit.

The second actor in the conflict was the Mexican government, which was very strong during this period due to a solid one party system that had been in power since 1929.[216] There was no significant opposition to block any activities of the ruling party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (Revolutionary Institutional Party, or PRI). One reason for this was that the government was able to initiate important reforms to gain followers, which kept people from following guerrilla groups. A second reason was the organizational presence of the PRI in all areas of the government and of Mexico.

During the Cold War, the guerrilla movements in Mexico were kept from rising due to strong governmental controls and the lack of international intervention, which

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[213] Neil Harvey, "The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy." (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 164.

[214] Oppenheimer, 45.

[215] Ibid., 237.

allowed the Mexican government to implement drastic policies if necessary. In the following sections I will describe how the government was able to put down guerrilla movements due to its control of the country and the lack of outside interference. The discussion focuses on Chiapas to demonstrate that the EZLN guerrilla movement could not have survived during the Cold War. Once the world environment changed due to the end of the Cold War, and Mexico began to join the world economy and international organizations, the government could no longer use force against guerrilla groups as before, and therefore the Zapatistas were able to survive.

1. Domestic Factors Affecting the Insurgency

During the Cold War, no guerrilla organization was able to dispute the power of the government or obtain popular support in Mexico. The state of Chiapas had some peasant and Indian organization during this period that were part of organized labor unions or political party affiliations. Their goal was to establish social programs in the area and fight for the rights of peasants and Indians, but they did not support the insurgents due the organizations ties to the government.

The few grassroots peasant and Indian organizations that were independent of government control were under the auspices of the Catholic Church. These church organizations were in the remote areas of Chiapas, mostly deep in the jungle where the government did not have a presence or the resources to help the population, and they sometimes disagreed with the local and federal governments. The origins of these groups can be traced back to 1976, when the Bishop of San Cristóbal de las Casas, Samuel

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216 Wayne A. Cornelius, "Mexican Politics in Transition: The Breakdown of a One-Party-Dominant Regime." Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, (San Diego: University of California San Diego, 1996), 1.

García Ruiz, met some of the cadres from the Proletarian Line (LP) group and invited them to Chiapas in order to organize the peasants and Indians into political movements.[217] He invited them because of their organizational skills, not knowing that they were guerrillas. Once they settled in, these guerrilla organizations took advantage of the cover given by the church and its peasant and Indian groups. They were not able to gain significant popular support until the late 1980s, however, for three key reasons.

First, the government was able to carry out social programs for the benefit of the poor and to buy out the opposition. During the 1930s, Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas distributed land to the small independent campesinos when he implemented his land reform, thus gaining their support.[218] As stated by the funding director of the of the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies, Wayne A. Cornelius: "After 1930, the rural poor became the largest support group of the Mexican government and of the official party."[219] Social programs to help the poor and marginalized sectors of the population undermined potential support from these sectors for the guerrilla movements. One such program that had a lot of success was "La Canasta Basica." Under this federally sponsored program, the government controlled the prices of basic food products, such as milk, beans, and tortillas. The prices were designated so that a person earning a minimum salary, which was also controlled by the government, could afford to eat and carry on a modest life. The Compañía Nacional de Subsistencias Populares (CONASUPO), a state-founded store system, was able to provide the basic food basket at

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[217] John Jr. Womack, "Rebellion in Chiapas: An Historical Reader." (New York: The New Press, 1999), 33-34.

[218] Harvey, "The Chiapas Rebellion: The Struggle for Land and Democracy," 78.

[219] Cornelius, 77.

prices affordable to the lower classes. The health system also was capable of filling the basic health needs of the poor. The government founded and supported the Instituto Mexicano del Seguro Social (IMSS, the Federal Health System), and state-run free clinics. The poor did not have to worry about the school system, since education up to the 12th grade and school books up to the 6th grade have always been free.

The government co-opted any opposition during this period by providing them special incentives, political positions, and favors. The government would offer the leaders of opposition groups concessions, and in response the leaders would convince their followers to accept a different strategy or to join the established PRI peasant organizations.[220] But when all efforts failed to convince the people to join the party line, the government did use force to achieve its goals.

The effective use of repression was the second reason the Mexican government faced no effective guerrilla challenges during the Cold War.[221] The internal security apparatus was so strong that guerrilla groups could not come out in the open without being crushed by the military and security services. The Mexican government disbanded the grass roots organizations that tried to challenge it during this period. Movement leaders were jailed, tortured, or killed.[222] A good example is the student revolt of 1968, in which thousands of students taking part in a demonstration in Tlatelolco were killed. President Díaz Ordaz justified these deaths in the context of the Cold War and the

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[220] Ibid.

[221] Ibid., 45.

[222] Harvey, 130.

containment of communism in Mexico.[223] The government and the ruling party, the PRI, dominated all aspects of the Mexican social and political systems, keeping control over any problems that could affect the stability of the nation.

Third, during the Cold War, the communications revolution did not affect guerrilla movements in Mexico because the Mexican government controlled the national news services, and private outlets belonged to elites who favored the government. The communications revolution started to gain ground in Mexico in the late 1960s, reaching the general population in the 1970s. Television and radio access spread, but the government had a monopoly on nationally televised news though Televisa, a network with political and social ties to the government and the PRI.[224] As late as the early 1990s, the Mexican media would not air or print anything critical of the president or government, whether it was at the local, state, or national level.[225] The media regarded the guerrilla groups as part of the Cold War fight between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, rather than as a response to domestic problems.[226]

These three pillars of government control began to erode towards the end of the Cold War. President Carlos Salinas de Gortari began a period of globalization in Mexico, which created new economic problems for the poorest sectors of Mexican society and led the government to cut subsides to these groups. These economic hardships were felt with force in the poorest parts of Mexico, and the poorest state in Mexico which is Chiapas. Although these problems started on a small scale during this period, their repercussions

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[223] Carlos Fuentes, "A New Time For Mexico," (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996), 126.

[224] Cornelius, 55.

[225] Fuentes, "A New Time For Mexico," 132.

became apparent after the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and they will be discussed in the post-Cold War section in detail.

2. International Factors Affecting the Insurgency

During the Cold War period, communist countries as a whole stayed away from supporting guerrilla groups in Mexico. In part this can be attributed to the low level of domestic support the guerrillas had. More important, however, was the Mexican government's foreign policy, which was sympathetic to Cuba and hostile to the United States. Cuba, which had helped many guerrilla movements in Latin America, avoided supporting any guerrilla movements in Mexico because it needed the Mexican government as an ally in international matters and to oppose anti-Cuban policies in the Organization of American States.[227] As a quid pro quo for the Mexican support, Cuba refused economic aid or training to guerrilla groups in Mexico.[228]

Even though the international community was not involved in guerrilla movements in Mexico, members did contribute economic aid to the Catholic Church in the region. In 1976, Bishop Ruiz introduced NGOs into Chiapas to help with the peasant organizations. One particular NGO, the Desarrollo Económico Social de los Mexicanos Indígenas (DESMI), helped the Bishop with economic and social work projects.[229]

Although the guerrillas did not immediately become a threat to the state, they did started to organize during this period. Guerrilla leaders obtained the support of church-led groups when they helped to organize the peasants for the church. But once the church

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[226] John Arquilla, and David Ronfeldt, "The Advent of Netwar." (Santa Monica: RAND, 1996), 55.

[227] Castañeda, 85.

[228] Ibid., 88.

leaders realized the intentions of the LP leaders, they tried to get their people back. Bishop Ruiz fought for two years after 1981 to get his followers to leave the guerilla-led organizations.[230] Finally in 1983, the LP withdrew from Chiapas, but the seeds were planted for future groups. The Frente de Liberación Nacional (FLN) and its rural arm, the Ejercito Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), took over where the LP left off in 1983.[231] Like the LP, the EZLN took advantage of the church organization and recruited peasants and Indians for its own purposes.

In 1986, the EZLN under the leadership of Subcommander Marcos started to receive money from DESMI, which funded the Zapatistas in the belief that they were a grassroots organization.[232] But under Marco's direction, this money was diverted and used to buy arms in preparation for the armed struggle.[233]

The international community in general and the United States in particular did not get involved in Mexican domestic problems. The American government considered Mexico to be a stable country and therefore left it alone, unlike other Central American nations. The international community also stayed out from Mexican politics and no significant efforts were made to press for the democratization of Mexico, as was done in other Latin America countries.

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[229] Womack, 32.

[230] Ibid., 35.

[231] Ibid., 36.

[232] Ibid., 37.

[233] Ibid., 39.

C. POST-COLD WAR

This section will focus on the domestic and international factors that undermined the Mexican government's ability to maintain control. The increase in the number of NGOs towards the end of the Cold War, the greater interest of international actors in democracy, and the integration of Mexico into the international economy led to more international influence on the insurgent conflict in Mexico during the post-Cold War period. Both insurgents and counterinsurgents were forced to change tactics as a result of these changes. In addition to the end of the Cold War, the communications revolution had a profound effect on the way insurgents and the government interacted with the rest of the world.

During the post-Cold War era, just as during the Cold War, the major players were the Zapatistas, who by the end of the Cold War had gained some support, and the Mexican government under the leadership of Presidents Carlos Salinas (1987 to 1994), and Ernesto Zedillo (1994 to 2000).

In this section I will illustrate how and why the Zapatistas dropped the old guerrilla tactics of armed battles against the government and damage to infrastructure. Initially, the Zapatistas wanted to take over the government as stated in their initial war declaration: "Advance to the capital of the country, conquering the Mexican federal army...."[234] But the goals of the Zapatistas during this period changed, in order for them to survive and be attractive to their domestic and new international supporters. Now they were fighting for protection of Indians' rights. They also were willing to seek changes politically rather than militarily.

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[234] Ibid., 249.

Domestic supporters agreed that changes were needed in Chiapas, but they did not wanted a second revolution in Mexico. The Zapatistas also gained very important international allies, mostly international NGOs, that became instrumental in their survival but that advocated change by peaceful means. These international organizations provided political clout and a significant amount of economic support to the Zapatistas.

As the Cold War ended so did the vindication the government claimed for fighting guerrilla groups. Government officials no longer could say that the guerrilla groups wanted to establish a communist satellite state in Mexico. The end of the Cold War coincided with Mexico's increased integration into the international economy, and as a consequence, international organizations started to affect the Mexican government more than ever. In order for Mexico to join the new world environment, Mexican policies had to present a more democratic face, not just nationally but also internationally. As a consequence of these developments, the government changed its behavior towards guerrillas. It implemented political reforms, social programs, and economic reforms, but most importantly, government leaders opened a dialogue with the EZLN aimed toward finding a solution to the conflict.

1. Domestic Factors and the Course of Insurgent Conflict (1987-94)

The period from 1987 to 1994 can be characterized as a time of economic transition and political evolution in Mexico. The central government made many drastic economic changes that affected the middle and lower classes of Mexico. Subsides to farmers were taken away and social programs such as CONASUPO disappeared. Those most deeply affected began to challenge the government.

The deepening integration of Mexico into the international market and the government's policies of adaptation affected the southern region of Mexico more drastically then the rest of the nation. It was in this period that the Zapatistas started to win more supporters. In June 1989, coffee prices in the international market fell, while at the same time the government removed federal support programs for farmers.[235] Coffee farmers were accustomed to getting an artificially high price for their crop, because the government would buy it from them at inflated prices in order to support the industry. When the government took away this subsidy, farmers started to feel the impact of the global economy. NAFTA was being negotiated at the time, and was scheduled to come into force in 1994, increasing farmers' fears of global competition. As early as 1989, many peasants and Indians started to switched from the PRI to opposition parties such as the Partido De La Revolución Democratica (PRD).[236]

Although these economic changes took place all over Mexico, the rebellion occurred in Chiapas because that state was one of the areas left behind by the economic transformation of Mexico. Its economy was never diversified nor was the area fully industrialized, and as people's economic situations deterioratied, the government lost the support of the peasants and Indians. The people of Chiapas, despite all its productive wealth, are poor. The state produces a third of the coffee grown in Mexico.[237] It accounts for over half of all the electricity generated, 21% of the oil, and 47% of the

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[235] Harvey, 140.

[236] Harvey, 141.

[237] Angela Maria Giordano, "Study of a storm: An analysis of Zapatista Propaganda." Master's Thesis, (Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School, 1997), 11.

natural gas produced in the country.[238] Chiapas lands are rich and productive, but only 16% of the land is used for agriculture.[239] Chiapas ranks 16th out of 32 states in revenue provided to the federal government, but yet is the poorest state in the nation. Forty-six percent of the population earn the minimum wage and 16.9% earn nothing at all.[240]

Most policies enacted in Chiapas during and just after the Cold War were directed by the central government, and often were not suitable for the local situation. This was less of an issue for the peasants and Indians during the Cold War period than it became once the Cold War ended. As local and federal social welfare and economic development programs disappeared, local needs went unmet and hardships increased, which contributed to many people's decision to embrace the guerrilla movements and their promises.

The government did try to obtain local support before the rebellion by implementing many local political and social changes, but these moves, coming too late and never fully implemented, were not sufficient to change the attitude of the people. A big influx of capital to Chiapas between 1989 and 1994 was used for investment and not job creation.[241] The indigenous people of Chiapas have not enjoyed many of the advantages of Mexico's economic development. Despite producing over one half of all

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[238] Secretaria de Gobernacion. Available. [Online]<http://200.38.180.4/prensa2/cont/asp/introduccion.asp. [17 October 1999].

[239] Ibid.

[240] INEGI. Available. [Online]<http://inegi.gob.mx/entidades/fbcn.html. [11 August 2000].

[241] Cornelius, 108.

the electricity in the country, only 30% of the population in Chiapas had electricity in 1994.[242]

The PRI began to lose support during this period because of the economic crisis, and as a consequence the party started to commit electoral fraud in order to keep power. In early 1994, for example the PRI ruled 110 municipalities out of 111 in the state of Chiapas, including the state governor, senators and representatives.[243] In Chiapas in particular it was easy for the PRI to maintain control because the opposition was not very strong, and the PRI could use coercion with impunity. Peasants and Indians unhappy with government policies were unable to change them though the ballot box, thus generating support for an armed solution.

2. Domestic Factors and the Course of Insurgent Conflict (1994-Present)

The government's first response to the rebellion in 1994 was a typical one: repression. Despite the ease with which it could have defeated the rebels, however, the government switched tactics after 12 days of fighting and decided to negotiate with the EZLN in order to reach a common solution to the problem. Similarly, the guerrillas changed the goal and tactics of their movement soon after the uprising, embracing political dialogue and lobbying. The shift in the government's behavior was possible only because of the changes the country was facing. Electoral, political, and economic reforms were underway. Most people were satisfied with the current trend and did not wanted an internal conflict to disrupt these advances. Domestic and international groups put pressure on both the government and the guerrillas to resolve their differences

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242 Robert E. Looney, and Peter Frederiksen, "The Regional Impact of Infrastructure Investment in Mexico." *"Regional Studies."* (Vol 15, no 4, 1981), 291.

peacefully. The guerrillas responded to these pressures by modifying their agenda, abandoning their intention to take over the government, and entering into dialogue with government leaders in order to reach a peaceful solution to their problems.

The Zapatistas never had much outside support for the agenda with which they first started fighting, and even Marcos admits the lack of national support for his cause.[244] The people who did support the Zapatistas supported their cause but not their methods. Universities across Mexico for example, started Zapatista support groups, but at the same time emphasized the need for peaceful negotiations to end the conflict. They wanted for the Zapatistas to drop their arms and join civil society in the quest of changes in a peaceful way.[245] Influential Mexican writer Carlos Fuentes noted: "The entire country condemns the violence. First of all, that of the guerrillas. Their despair is understandable--but not their methods."[246] Even the Catholic Church, itself an incubator of grassroots movements and defender of the poor in Chiapas, came out openly during this period to preach for an end to the hostilities by the Zapatistas. Bishop Ruiz personally went to the jungle and towns to preach for a separation of the peasants and Indians from the guerrilla groups and to stop the violence.[247]

The government also was forced to change tactics due to the new international environment and domestic pressures to become more democratic. Right after the initial rebellion, in January 1994 and early 1995, mass demonstrations were held in Mexico

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[243] Oppenheimer, 59.

[244] Ibid., 42.

[245] Womack, 49.

[246] Fuentes, "A New Time For Mexico," 89.

[247] Womack, 41.

City, to force the government to withdraw the Mexican Army from the rebel area.[248] Groups were created for the support of the Zapatistas around Mexico, and many forums were opened in the universities to discuss the problem.

In response to this pressure, both domestic and international, many changes were made after the rebellion, not just in Chiapas but all over Mexico. At the national level, political and electoral reforms were carried out. Locally, improvements were made to the security, health, education, and transportation systems in Chiapas. But most importantly, the government initiated a peace dialogue.

The government implemented national political reforms that opened a door for the Zapatistas and other opposition groups to participate politically. The electoral reforms of the 1990s were an important step in the democratization of the country. Among other things, these reforms created the Instituto Federal Electoral (Federal Electoral Institute, IFE) as an independent agency, and mandated equal time to all political parties on national television.[249] In 1994, Mexico held its first televised presidential debate with the opposition present.[250] This air time is paid for by the IFE .

The minority parties are now gaining ground and have been able to obtain important political posts all over the country, changing the political structure of the nation. The whole political system is changing, as Carlos Fuentes noted during the 1994 election: "I felt for the first time that we could no longer equate 'PRI candidate' and

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[248] Harvey, 134.

[249] Cornelius, 57.

[250] Oppenheimer, 321.

'president of Mexico."[251] Currently, Mexico is in a transition from a one party system to a three party system. The parties are the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI), Partido Acción Nacional (PAN), and Partido De La Revolución Democratica (PRD). In 1997, during the first mayoral race in the capital city, the winner was a candidate of the PRD. In the 1997 senatorial elections, the results were not typical: minority parties won senate and lower house seats. President Zedillo has sent a message about the need to reform to the PRI politicians many times.[252] The bribing of reporters is no longer allowed.[253] In 1997, for the first time in modern Mexican history, the PRI lost control of the lower house of Congress.[254]

The government also has carried out a series of reforms at the local level. Security for citizens was improved with federal money used to hire more local policemen. The court system was overhauled, enforcing justice more fairly in all communities and to all income levels. The justice system overall in Mexico grew by 174.7% in 1999.[255] The Mexican government has directed resources into its security forces not to suppress the Zapatistas, but to protect them from rightist paramilitary groups that formed after their uprising, such as the "Guardias Blancas" (White Guards). These groups are paid by the local elites, and sometimes harass or kill peasants and Indians who

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[251] Fuentes, "A New Time For Mexico." 108.

[252] Luis Rubio, "Coping with Political Change" In "Mexico Under Zedillo." Susan Kaufman Purcell, and Luis Rubio, ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 16.

[253] Cornelius, 55.

[254] Susan Kaufman Purcell, "The New U.S.-Mexico Relationship." In "Mexico Under Zedillo." Susan Kaufman Purcell, and Luis Rubio, ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 120.

[255] "Economic Policy Guidelines for 1999." Mexico City: Mexico Ministry of Finance, 1998.

challenge the status quo.[256] Another paramilitary group that has the support of the political elite in Chiapas is "Paz y Justicia" (Peace and Justice). This group has been able to operate in the area with the protection of the local PRI.[257]

In Chiapas economic and political decisions are now being made locally, making the state more flexible in accommodating the changing needs of its people. From January to June 1999, "El Fondo de Financiamiento para las Empresas de Solidaridad del Sector Artesanal de Chiapas" (FOFESSA), provided 1,797,875 pesos (about $200,000 at the exchange rate of 9 pesos per one dollar) to peasants or small entrepreneurs who wanted to open or expand their own business.

The regional health system has expanded and modernized, an important reason the Zapatistas have not been able to increase their local support. [258] The state had three women's hospitals in 1994; at the beginning of 1999 there were twenty-three new women's hospitals. A total of 143 new medical facilities were built between 1994 and 1998. Although some of the programs are not new, they now are more effectively managed, with state and federal supervision.

Education in Chiapas also has improved over the past four years, and the state now has one of the strongest educational systems in the country. The state government, with federal funds, constructed 4,504 new schools in a period of four years and hired 10,450 new teachers. Again with the help of federal funds, the state introduced a breakfast program to feed 480,000 children in 38 different municipalities. The

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256 Oppenheimer, 50.

257 Harvey, 140.

258 Fuentes, "A New Time For Mexico," 88.

government also increased funding for student loans to the state university, which was able to increase its undergraduate student population by 54 percent, and its Master's candidates by 250 percent.[259]

Transportation also has improved since the 1994 rebellion, with the construction of 1,194 new kilometers of roads in Chiapas.

Under Zedillo, the federal government established the Commission of Concord and Pacification (COCOPA) in 1995, whose main goal was to deal with the Zapatistas peacefully and to conduct negotiations towards the end of the conflict.[260] These negotiations concluded with the San Andrés talks and its accords, signed on 18 January 1996. These documents establish protection rights for Indians.[261] On 1 January 1996, the Zapatistas created the "Frente Zapatista de Liberacón Nacional" (Zapatistas National Liberation Front) as a political organization to fight in the political arena for their demands.[262]

But in September 1996, the Zapatistas broke off all talks with the government. This event coincided with the birth of a new guerrilla group, the "Ejército Popular Revolucionario" (EPR) that carried out violent attacks on police stations and led many people to stop supporting the Zapatistas and to call for peace.[263] In Chiapas in particular, the 1994 elections demonstrated to the people that the reforms were real. Observers in

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[259] A new University was funded in Chiapas in 1998.

[260] Womack, 47.

[261] Ibid., 50.

[262] Harvey, 135.

[263] Ibid., 139.

the state declared the elections fair and free of fraud.[264] More recently, in the August 2000 elections, the PRI lost the governorship of the state, which brings new hope for the democratization process, for the peace process, and for Chiapas.

All these changes on the national and local levels have been positive. Results are coming slowly, but they are changing the attitude of the local population in favor of the government, especially for the government's effort to modernize the region and its willingness to find peaceful solutions to local discontent.[265] Some peasants and Indians even have started to support the government, as shown by the decrease in the number of Zapatista supporters since 1994.

3. International Factors Affecting the Insurgency

The international community and especially NGOs have been crucial to the initial survival and continued economic and political support of the Zapatistas. The local populace has little money to support the movement; therefore, the only reliable support the EZLN has to sustain them and back them politically is from NGOs and foreign individual supporters. Without international attention and NGO support, the Zapatistas probably would not even have survived their initial uprising on 1 January 1994.[266] Within hours of the start of their rebellion, NGOs and individual citizens started letter campaigns against the Mexican government in support of Marcos, another reason the army did not immediately eliminate the rebels.[267]

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[264] Ibid., 133.

[265] Womack, 49.

[266] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, Fuller, and Fuller, 22.

[267] Ibid.

Once EZLN leaders realized the importance of international organizations to their survival, they transformed themselves in 1995 from a guerrilla group that wanted to take over the government into the protectors of peasants' and Indians' rights.[268] In his third declaration, dated 1 January 1995, Marcos emphasized Indians rights.[269] This tactic to gain support has continued to be developed; in Marcos' fifth declaration, dated July 1998, he calls for the recognition of Indian rights and Indian involvement in the development of the nation.[270] Marcos has been more careful in his speeches since he started receiving international support. He no longer challenges the Mexican government, even when his followers want him to. This transformation won the EZLN support in Paris, Madrid, and Mexico City, which helped them to survive.[271]

The NGOs have also been a key element in preventing the government from carrying out violations of human rights and in promoting negotiations.[272] The Mexican government wanted to show the world that Mexico was a democratic nation and that freedom of expression was allowed. In 1992, President Salinas, recognizing the importance of the church in Mexico, decided to resume relations with the Vatican that had been severed for 128 years.[273] This event brought recognition to Vatican

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[268] Guillermo Trejo, and Claudio Jones, "Political Dilemmas of Welfare Reform: Poverty and Inequality in Mexico" In "Mexico Under Zedillo." Susan Kaufman Purcell and Luis Rubio, ed. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 95.

[269] Womack, 290.

[270] Ibid., 367-370.

[271] Oppenheimer, 47.

[272] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, Fuller, and Fuller, 65.

[273] Ibid.

organizations in Mexico, including Vatican-sanctioned NGOs. Some of these new NGOs went to Chiapas and helped the local church organize peasants and Indians.

By the end of 1994, there were 250 human rights-oriented NGOs in Mexico that were involved in the Zapatista rebellion.[274] In 1997, the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy (NED) invested $800,000 to promote civil organization in Mexico alone.[275] Other organizations, such the "Escuela de Capacitacíon Civica and the "Centro Civico," are getting more support from the international community and are increasingly involved in human rights training.[276] All these organizations are in Chiapas helping with the pacification of the region and to bring both parties to a general agreement.

It was the right time for NGOs to put pressure on Mexico and let the Zapatistas survive. But NGO involvement in Zapatistas demonstrations has brought government condemnation and continual surveillance. More than seventy-six foreign rights monitors have been expelled from Chiapas as the result of a government crackdown on unauthorized NGO intervention.[277] President Zedillo made the accusation that NGOs "...invent a cause of a supposed humanitarian nature in order to promote and carry out their political agenda."[278]

The second international actor in the aftermath of the Chiapas uprising was the United States, which was instrumental in bringing economic stability to the country after

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274 Ketherine, M. Bailey, "NGOs Take to Politics: The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Mexico's Democratization Effort." (Washington: Associates in Rural Development, Inc, 1998), 10.

275 Anita Isaacs, "International Assistance for Democracy: A cautionary Tale" In "The Future of Inter-American Relations." Domínguez, Jorge I, ed. (New York: Routledge, 2000), 268.

276 Ibid., 279-280.

277 Womack, 57.

278 "Mexico: NGOs and Government Increasingly at Odds." *InterPress Service,* 21 May 1998.

the rebellion. This support allowed the Mexican government to continue with its economic, political, and social reforms. Between the Zapatista conflict and the devaluation of the peso, the Mexican government was in a critical economic and social situation. The peso lost 50% of its value and foreign investors started to pull their money out of the Mexican economy.[279] The United States came to the Mexican government's aid because of the two countries' close economic ties. In 1995, President Clinton authorized a $25 billion loan to Mexico, an act that gave Mexico the confidence and solidity it needed to show to the world that the Mexican government was still in control.[280] Investors who started to pull their money out of Mexico after the rebellion saw a return of the stability they needed in order to bring their money back.

Foreign investment in Chiapas grew from $344.8 million in 1994 to $2,300 million in 1998.[281] Public expenditure in Chiapas has been increasing every year, from 7.6 million pesos in 1994 to 18.8 million pesos in 1998, and in fiscal year 1999 to 20.8 million pesos.[282]

a) Communications Revolution

The communications revolution has given the media influence in national and international policies by changing people's perception of events covered by the

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[279] Susan Kaufman Purcell, and Luis Rubio, ed. "Mexico Under Zedillo." (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998), 131.

[280] Collier, and Quaratiello, 166-7.

[281] BANCOMEXT SECOFI, Inversión Extranjera en México, 1998.

[282] Gobierno Estatal de Chiapas. Available. [Online]<http://www.chiapas.gob.mx/rag/cumple/actividades/finanzas.htm. [4 December 1999].

news.[283] In the United States in the 1960s, television became the most authoritative source of news.[284] Mexico followed the same path, but not until the 1970s. These changes in communications make governments more susceptible to popular demands.[285] The communications revolution has been the most important tool for the Zapatistas to win popular support, but ironically, it also forced them to modify their behavior. Access to swift communications helped the Mexican government contain the Zapatistas and prevent further fighting.

Since the end of the Cold War, political reforms have allowed an independent media to be born at the same time that communications equipment was being modernized and new technology introduced. During the Cold War and into the early 1990s, the national broadcast outlet Televisa reached up to 95 percent of the television audience in Mexico.[286] In the mid-1990s this monopoly has decreased with the rise of independent television stations such as Television Azteca.[287] But the most important change has been the liberty given to the press, radio, and television.[288]

With regard to the Zapatista movement, the impact of the communications revolution can be divided in three sections: first, its effect on the local population and government; second, at the national level; and third, in the international community.

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[283] Minear, Scott, and Weiss, 35.

[284] Ibid., 98.

[285] Ibid., 175.

[286] Oppenheimer, 128.

[287] Ibid., 321.

[288] Fuentes, "A New Time For Mexico." 167.

First, on the local level, the communications revolution played little role in modifying behavior or affecting the peasants and Indians in Chiapas. The majority of people in Chiapas do not have a television, few have radios, and even fewer can read or write Spanish.[289] Word of the rebellion was passed from individual to individual through personal contact, a very effective means of communication by which the Zapatistas initiated their rebellion. The communications revolution was important to sustain the movement once it started, but did not play an important role in the local organization and support of the movement.

Second, on the national level, the communications revolution helped the Zapatistas to disseminate their message, and to obtain some initial support from the rest of the country. The Mexican people were made aware of the situation in Chiapas, and began to recognize that Chiapas was being left behind in the economic transformation of Mexico. Before the Zapatista uprising, most Mexicans were not aware of how much Chiapas contributed to the nation's economy, and how little the federal government gave back. The news media attracted national attention to Chiapas, changing general perceptions and gaining the rebels the initial support they needed to survive.[290]

Third, on the international level, the communications revolution has had a tremendous impact on the Zapatistas, and through it the Zapatistas have affected the world. In 1994, the Zapatistas came out with guns, but their most important weapon has turned out to be the media.

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[289] Oppenheimer, 81.

[290] Minear, Scott, and Weiss, 33.

Even the fame of Subcommandante Marcos can be attributed to the international press and its fast dissemination of images of the conflict. Initially, the spokesman for the Zapatistas was going to be a different person, but because Marcos was more appealing to the international press, he ended up being the movement's voice.

The communications revolution brought new hardware and software that has allowed the rebels to communicate with friendly NGOs, but most importantly has enabled them to obtain support within seconds. Zapatistas were able to disseminate information and news of the conflict to the world without the need of a reporter to be present. The EZLN obtained access to communications equipment outside Mexico that can reach into Mexico electronically. The Mexican government cannot destroy the Internet servers that are disseminating the rebels' messages, because they are located abroad and therefore off limits to government interference. This is very important, because up until now the Mexican government has been very successful in physically restricting the entrance of NGOs into Mexico. The Internet servers are private, located outside Mexico, and maintained by non-Mexicans, but most importantly, they belong to NGOs.

Marcos has been engaged in a social netwar with the Mexican government. A netwar is a fight that takes place on the Internet, a fight of words and information. The fight became a fight of information, as stated by the Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations Rodolfo Montes: "The shots lasted 10 days, and ever since the war has been a war of ink, of written word, a war on the Internet."[291] Marcos has been able to put all his speeches and also his own intentions and goals for the Zapatistas on the

Internet. He has a personal Internet homepage. The Zapatistas also have the support of different organizations that have created Internet homepages on the Chiapas conflict.

One of the main organizations involved in helping the Zapatistas is the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) and its affiliates Peacenet in the United States and Alternex in Brazil.[292] APC provides access to over 20,000 activists in 133 countries and in fifteen languages.[293] All these assets have been available to Marcos since 1994 and they are growing constantly. The use of the Internet by Marcos has given him an advantage that other guerrilla groups did not have in the past. The Zapatistas have been credited as being the first guerilla group to be able to use the Internet to their advantage.[294] The Zapatista leader has been able to gain supporters outside Mexico and access to international NGOs willing to disseminate his message or even raise money for his cause. NGOs have gained influence all over the world since the end of the Cold War. Some have been able to create lobbies in the Mexican government and other nations to petition for the Zapatistas' causes and a peaceful end to the conflict.

The Mexican government has answered back with its own Internet homepage on the Chiapas conflict. The Chiapas conflict has a special section on the Presidential Homepage, and on that of the Secretaria de Gobierno (State Department). All the points made by Marcos concerning the deficiencies in Chiapas are responded to

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[291] Rodolfo Montes, Mexican Secretary of Foreign Relations. *"Reforma Newspaper,"* 26 April 1995.

[292] Ronfeldt, Arquilla, Fuller, and Fuller, 39.

[293] Ibid., 177.

[294] "Zapatistas Backers Rally Forces Via Net." Available. [Online]<http://www.wired.com/news/news/politics/story/1823.html. [22 October 1999].

on the Presidential Homepage. The Mexican government also has been using the media, especially television, to show its own people how it has reformed its policies.

The government has engaged in an Internet war against Marcos personally. Lately, Marcos also has been having credibility problems among the Mexican people. Some Indians have accused him of robbery and corruption, which the Mexican government has been able to exploit. A former guerrilla accused him of overcharging peasants who purchase rifles, arms, and machine guns. Marcos has been charging $2,000 for an AK-47 rifle, even though the cost of the same rifle is $800 on the Chiapas black market. He also is trying to commit the Indians to the conflict, according to Andres Oppenheimer: "The idea had been to commit the Mayans to the Rebellion by making them sacrifice some of their most precious possessions."[295] By possessions, Oppenheimer is referring to the little money possessed by the peasants and Indians, who in some cases have to sell their land in order to get the money for weapons.

4. Other Guerrilla Groups

Since the Zapatista rebellion, other guerilla groups have emerged in Mexico. These new groups, however, have not been able to win popular support. They have been using the same initial tactics that the Zapatistas used: confronting the government and manifesting their disagreement with violence. The most recent and larger of these is the EPR, which emerged in June 1996.[296]

This group has not been as successful as the Zapatistas, nor has it obtained additional supporters. It is considered too extremist by the people, and the government

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[295] Oppenheimer, 240.

has been able to hunt down its members without any popular disapproval. The Mexican army has responded to this group rapidly by arresting all known members. Even President Zedillo openly said that they were "a bad guerrilla group."[297] The Zapatistas distance themselves from the EPR, declaring that they have no relations with the EPR guerrilla group.[298]

Mexico apparently has entered a new era in which the government is responding to the people's needs, and is thus gaining popular support. New guerrilla groups do not seem to be appealing to the Mexican people or the international community, particularly if they resort to violence.

D. CONCLUSION

The Cold War period was a difficult time for guerrilla groups in Mexico. Rebels were suppressed as soon as they came out into the open, forcing many to stay underground in order to survive. The Mexican government was very effective at suppressing guerrillas during the Cold War, including the Zapatistas of the 1980s, for two reasons.

First, the Mexican federal government was in control of all internal affairs, and any conflict, whether local or national, brought a swift response as soon as it became known. But most importantly, the government was able to take care of the basic needs of the poor and carried out important reforms in their favor. In consequence, the masses

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[296] Michael J. Mazarr, "Mexico 2005: The Challenges of the New Millennium." (Washington: The CSIS Press, 1999), 106.

[297] Harvey, 210.

[298] Ibid, 210.

were not attracted to the guerrillas' message. The political system also was very important to centralized control during this period. The one party system allowed PRI leaders to reward loyal followers with political favors. But when all else failed, it also was able to provide effective coercion.

Second, the government controlled all means of communication and media. No negative information about the government was allowed to be printed, televised, or sometimes even discussed.

International actors had little influence on the guerrilla movements or the Mexican government during this period. Mexico kept itself isolated from international organizations and maintained a policy of non-intervention in other's countries' conflicts.

In the new post-Cold War environment, international actors became more important players. Once the Zapatistas came out in arms, the government decided not to crush them, because it did not want to look authoritarian in the eyes of an international audience, in the new era of global transparency and cooperation.

Other guerrilla groups have emerged since the Zapatistas, such as the ERP. These groups are smaller and more violent, and therefore have been less successful at obtaining any support. The Mexican army has responded to these groups with rapid suppression and arrests, with very positive results and no media disapproval.

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V. CONCLUSION

This thesis has illustrated the changes in the nature of international support to guerrilla conflicts, as a direct consequence of the end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the communications revolution.

A. COLD WAR

During the Cold War, the bipolar division of the world led by the United States and the Soviet Union influenced guerrilla movements in Latin America. Guerrilla conflicts had the full financial and logistical support of the two superpowers and their allies, making civil wars an extension of their fight for global dominance. Wars of attrition were almost inevitable, because support seemed infinite and no one was willing to negotiate or make concessions.

When left-wing Latin American insurgents had the economic backing of the Soviet Union, Cuba, and later of Nicaragua, they sought nothing less than total dissolution of the current regimes and the establishment of socialist governments. The quantity of external support available gave the guerrillas no reason to stop short of full victory.

At the same time, the governments in Latin America that were fighting leftist insurgents during the Cold War had the full support of the United States. Every American president during the Cold War became involved in the short-term goal of stopping the spread of communist-backed insurgencies in Latin America. This priority led the United States to support most Latin American governments involved in guerrilla

wars regardless of their record on human rights and democracy. U.S. assistance prolonged the internal conflict in many cases and allowed government leaders to avoid pursuing domestic reforms, political changes, or peace talks as solutions to the conflict. Even under U.S. President Jimmy Carter, who did try to push the Salvadoran government to stop human right violations, over 14,000 cases were reported.

The Salvadoran case demonstrates that the international environment during the Cold War kept the Salvadoran guerrilla conflict alive without room for dialogue. Although national support for the guerrillas should have pressured the government to carry out reforms and negotiate, U.S. aid to the regime undermined these incentives.

By the mid-1980s, popular support for the guerrillas declined due to democratic electoral changes the government made. This should have encouraged the Salvadoran rebels to go to the negotiating table, but they refused due to the influx of external aid to their cause. Not until the collapse of the Soviet Union were the guerrillas willing to negotiate.

The Mexican case study shows that the Cold War was a time in which Mexican guerrillas could not muster significant national or international support for their cause. Nationally, guerrillas were afraid of annihilation at the hands of a strong, effective, and ruthless government. Thousands of students were killed when the government put down a student revolt in 1968, with no repercussions to the government or the military. Also, the government chose to carry out some social programs to help the poor, and was able to benefit from its status as the party of the revolution. Programs such as CONASUPO and SOLARIDAD were key in keeping the support of the masses. Internationally, the guerrillas could not obtain support from other foreign countries such as Cuba, because

Cuba needed the support of the Mexican government and would not risk its relationship with it.

The communications revolution was getting started in Mexico during this period, but guerrillas could not benefit because the national media were controlled by the government, and the ruling PRI was able to control the national newscasters and programs through TELEVISA. The guerrillas had no means to disseminate their messages to the people or their propaganda against the government in the national media.

B. POST COLD-WAR

After the end of the Cold War, a new security environment emerged in the world, shaped by the dissolution of the Soviet Union and changes in the foreign policy of the United States. These changes directly affected guerrilla conflicts all over the world. Both insurgents and counterinsurgents experienced a shift in supporters and objectives. Once the guerrillas realized that their major supporters could no longer afford to help them, and the national governments realized that U.S. priorities had changed, both sides had to reevaluate their goals and methods. The guerrilla movements most dependent on external aid were the ones hardest hit by these shifts. The withdrawal of a large portion of American economic support to the Latin American governments involved in counterinsurgency, and the conditions attached to the remaining aid, forced those governments to institute political, economic, and social reforms.

Supplemental aid came from international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the United Nations. Although these actors already were involved in the conflicts during the Cold War, their influence and power grew once it ended. Guerrilla groups used foreign aid to survive and to increase their international following,

which they needed in conjunction with domestic support to further their plans and propaganda. In contrast to the ideological goals of the United States and the former Soviet Union, however, these new international supporters wanted both sides to start working toward peace settlements. They exerted pressure by demanding changes in the way the aid they offered was being used, and by tying it to progress in peace negotiations.

The United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and Latin American countries were deeply involved in the Salvadoran peace negotiations that followed the end of the Cold War, and which would not have been possible without their involvement. The United Nations started to provide aid to the Salvadoran government, encouraging it to reach for a peace solution. The final step was the formation of COPAZ by the United Nations in 1991, which led to the peace agreement signed between President Cristiani's administration and the leaders of the FMLN guerillas on 16 January 1992 in Mexico City.

The acceleration of the communications revolution also has helped these new actors disseminate their messages and obtain support. Recent advances in global communications have led to the "CNN effect," which is responsible for many international interventions in regions of conflict, and to the emerging significance of the "Crisis Triangle," composed of policy makers, humanitarian agencies, and the Western news media. NGOs have been able to use these new tools to their advantage, to push government and insurgent leaders toward their desired goals.

The acceleration of the communications revolution played a very important part in the survival of the Zapatistas. It helped the Zapatistas to obtain some national support, but most importantly to reach international organizations that the Mexican government could not control. The use of the media to obtain international support guaranteed the

survival of the organization and obligated the Mexican government to listen to its demands. It also forced the Zapatistas to the bargaining table with the Mexican government.

The new post-Cold War environment also affected the Mexican government's response to insurgency. Instead of responding to uprisings with violence and repression, Mexican leaders were compelled to foster an image of democratic stability that would attract foreign investment. The government had to respond to an international audience by formulating policies that addressed people's grievances and sought to achieve a peaceful solution to conflict.

Over the last ten years, changes caused by the communications revolution have fundamentally altered conflicts around the world, particularly insurgent conflicts in Latin America. These changes have resulted in a new environment in which the collection, analysis, and distribution of information play a key role in the survival or termination of guerrilla conflicts. The end of the Cold War and the acceleration of the communications revolution have contributed to the peace process by making NGOs and international organizations key players. Due to the ability of NGOs to lobby and influence both insurgents and governments, guerrilla conflicts have moved from the battlefield to the peace table.

C. FUTURE

This thesis has examined several factors in guerrilla conflicts that have had an impact on the outcome of insurgencies, and that could be duplicated all over the world. International organizations, such as the United Nations, and non-governmental organizations are continually growing and increasing their involvement around the world.

This trend indicates that they will continue to be motivated to intervene in civil conflicts in ways similar to our case studies. For example, international organizations, European nations and even Latin American countries have recently invited guerrilla leaders in Colombia to engage in peace talks.

We should expect international organizations to have an impact in cases where they have gained significant influence in a country through funding and other support. In these cases international organizations must have close contact with the governments and guerrillas, and be able to provide sufficient aid to make both groups dependent on their aid. In such cases, the organizations will be able to apply the leverage needed to persuade governments and insurgents to start negotiations and accept a peace treaty.

The case study of El Salvador demonstrated that once the government ceased to received significant U.S. aid and became dependent on aid from other international actors, it had to adhere to the stipulations of the new aid donors. International organizations also will be able to influence a government that has joined the world economy and is responding to global economic and political pressures, as in the case of Mexico. But international actors are less likely to influence governments in countries that do not depend on world trade or that are able to disregard international pressures.

The Colombian government has responded positively to U.S. stipulations attached to the most recent U.S. aid package, because officials there realize that the United States is serious about the conditions in which the aid should be used, that it will be pulled if those requirements are ignored. At the same time the U.S. government stipulations resemble the same stipulations of international organizations. International organizations such as the United Nations and human rights agencies have put pressure on the United

States to have specific requirements on the aid given to the Colombian government. This is significant since the international organizations have been able to influence the aid given by an independent country to reflect the desires of them.

On the other hand, a growing number of international organizations have become involved in the current Colombian situation but have been unable to influence the guerrillas and bring about peace. The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the main opposition group, has not been influenced by these international actors because few NGOs have been able to establish ties with it, and the amount of resources they are able to bring to bear is insignificant compared to the support the FARC receives from other transnational actors, such as drug dealers and arms dealers. These supporters are not interested in peace negotiations but in profits, and their impact on the Colombian conflict has been devastating. These third non-state actors are difficult for governments or outsiders to control, making them a very dangerous element in guerrilla conflicts.

Thus, international organizations will have an impact on guerrilla groups when those groups are dependent on their aid or support and no other external actors are involved. The FMLN in El Salvador responded to the pressures of international organizations once it lost Soviet aid and become more dependent on the international organizations aid. A guerrilla that is able to appeal to the international community, such as Marcos did in Mexico, will also be responsive to outside pressure. The Zapatista case shows how access to global communications can help bring national attention to local problems, and more importantly, to garner international attention. But even when these requirements are met, the insurgency movement will not be successful if it is too violent

or extreme to gain the support of international actors, as the case of the EPR in Mexico shows.

With the end of the Cold War, guerrilla movements have diminished but not disappeared. They have proved themselves able to adapt to the new post-Cold War environment. The United States must recognize the changes that have come about and be able to react appropriately to them. Non-state and international organizations behave differently from state actors. Their goals are more clear and the money they provide is conditioned by requirements that recipients must obey in order to continue getting support. By understanding the impact of non-state actors on insurgents and counterinsurgents, and also how organizations employ the media, we can understand these new relationships.

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